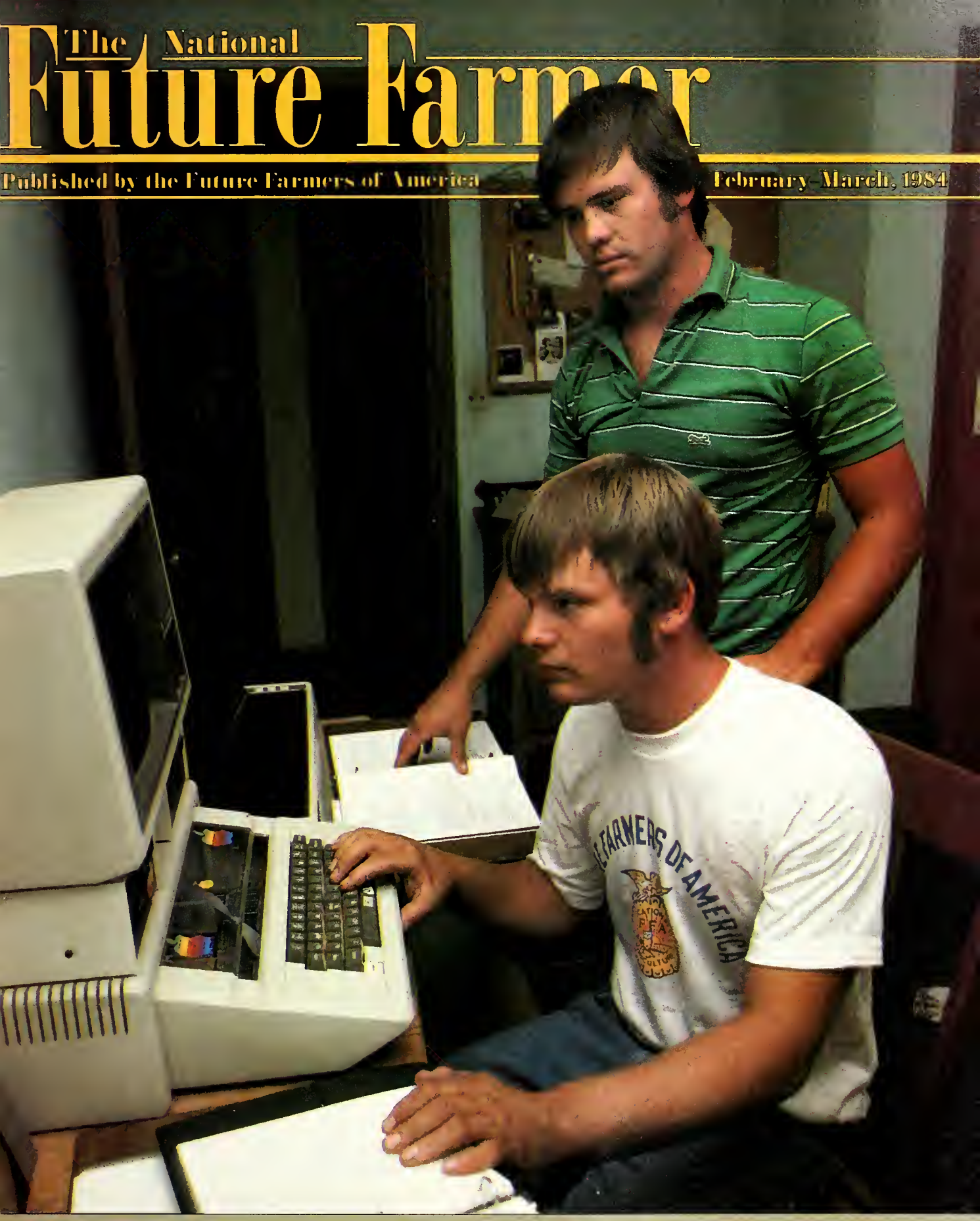
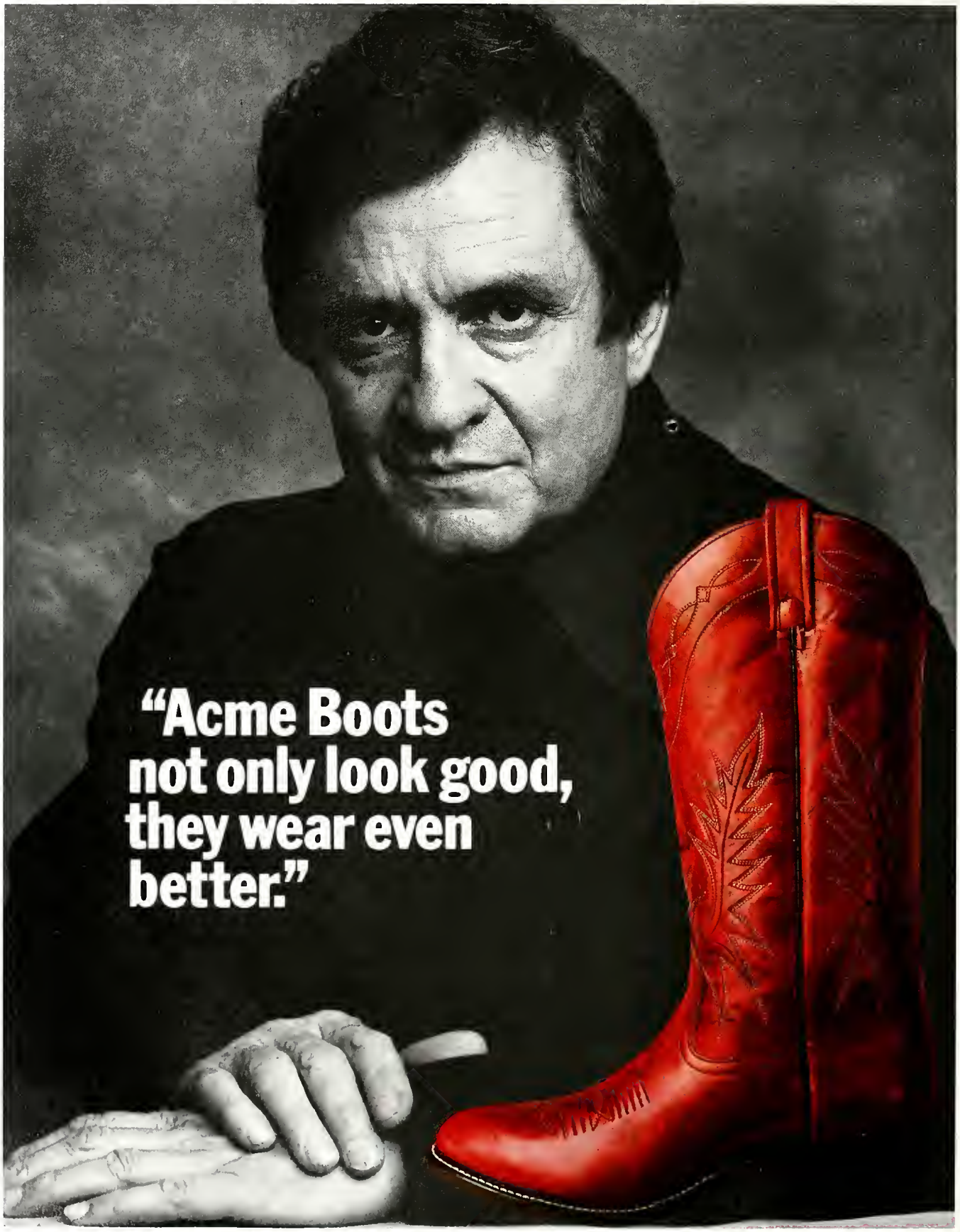
The National
Future Farmer
Published by the Future Farmers of America
February-March, 1984



Inside this Issue: **Computers In Agriculture**
On The Robinson Road



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The National
Future Farmer
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February-March, 1984
Volume 32 Number 3 ISSN 0027-9315

A Word With The Editor

The future. Unknown and unpredictable, the future can cause worries for us all. But for vocational agriculture students, the future holds even more questions. Should I stay in farming? In agribusiness? Should I go to college? Where will I be ten years from now, and what will I be doing? Planning for future paths can be an exciting, but unnerving experience.

This issue is filled with stories about the future: what it may bring, how to set your goals for it, and how to insure that your future is the one you *choose*—not one you'll end up in. "Top Answers to Tough Questions," beginning on page 24, is an in-depth look at many of the questions you may have already faced regarding careers and college options. And our "Farm Strategies" story, starting on page 11, may prove helpful as you plan for the 1984 farm growing season.

Perhaps the most exciting area of agriculture these days is the area of farm computers. What once was considered "futuristic," is now a bonafide farm management tool, helping farmers and Future Farmers alike by providing information fast and analyzing data for better farm management. Like it or not, the computer will play a big part in your future in agriculture. That's why we're presenting a 13-page "Computers in Agriculture" special section in this issue, beginning on page 27.

Even if you leave agriculture entirely, computers will almost certainly be a part of your life. They are changing the way we do things, and this will continue to an even greater degree in the future. Fact is, at all job levels, higher skills will be required in just about every line of work. We are becoming more involved in an electronic age—and you need to be prepared to meet this challenge.

Those who *are* ready to meet this challenge have insured a bright future for themselves.

Wilson Carnes

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Cover: *Cover Photo by Michael Wilson*
Scott Robinson, left, and brother Kevin, of Eskridge, Kansas, fire up their home farm's microcomputer to analyze farm management data. Scott and Kevin have a family custom harvesting business with their father Hal. Read about them on page 14. You'll also see Kevin on page 28, part of this issue's special section on computers in agriculture.

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Old Greenwich, CT 06870 203-637-4397

The National FUTURE FARMER (ISSN 0027-9315) is published bimonthly by the Future Farmers of America, 5632 Mount Vernon Highway, Alexandria, Virginia 22309. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the National FUTURE FARMER, P.O. Box 15160, Alexandria, Virginia 22309.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Send both old and new address to Circulation Department, *The National FUTURE FARMER*, P.O. Box 15160, Alexandria, Virginia 22309. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Address all correspondence to: *The National FUTURE FARMER*, P.O. Box 15160, Alexandria, Virginia 22309. Offices located at the National FFA Center, approximately eight miles south of Alexandria, Virginia. **SUBSCRIPTION:** $2.50 per year in U.S. and possessions (FFA members $1.25 paid with dues). Single copy 50¢; five or more 35¢ each. Foreign subscriptions, $2.50 plus $2.00 extra for postage.
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The FFA News in Brief

COMPUTERIZED ORDERING of items from the National FFA Supply Service is helping to speed processing of banquet supplies and other items. FFA members and advisors can help make the new system more efficient by including your chapter's "number"—found in the upper left portion of your chapter roster—on supply service orders and all remittances. Make a note of this for the next time you order, and remember: order early to beat the big "banquet-season" rush.

HESSTON'S ANNUAL "SALUTE to Agriculture" essay contest named a winner at the 1983 National FFA Convention. Kevin Ochsner, a Larimer County FFA member from Fort Collins, Colorado, earned top honors with his winning salute: "The American Farmer, a quiet and unsung hero, has weathered droughts and floods, withstood embargoes and price freezes, and endured high interest rates and low commodity prices. Though a monument has never been erected to recognize this fact, the American Farmer exhibits the ingenuity of a military genius, the heroism of a NASA astronaut, and the dedication of the cancer research scientist. For it is this individual who, through the years, has stabilized our economy by creating millions of jobs, offsetting trade deficits, and above all has placed food on the plates of millions."

FFA NATIONAL FOUNDATION reports new support through the following sponsor contributions: Economics Laboratory, Inc.; American Beauty Macaroni Company; American Morgan Horse Institute Inc.; Chore-Time Equipment, Inc.; The Paul Ecke Poinsettia Ranch; Gerber Baby Foods Fund; National Oats Company, Inc.; Tandy Corporation; and Yamaha Motor Corporation.

THE 1983-84 NATIONAL officer team, after spending two weeks preparing schedules and going through training sessions at the National FFA Center in December, is now gearing up for a busy springtime. The officers will travel to Japan for a glimpse of international agricultural methods before returning home later this month for a tour of their own country—meeting with agribusinesses and FFA supporters during the annual U.S. national officer tour. Then it's on to speaking engagements at FFA banquets across the nation.

NATIONAL FFA ALUMNI Association has a new president and a new record: Illinois state FFA official Eldon Witt, who succeeds Ken Seering as president, reports an all-time high national alumni membership of 25,403 members for 1983.

THE REVOLVING DOORS of the FFA Work Experience Abroad program never seem to stop. Fifteen FFA members, including one student in Panama, returned home in December from 3- and 6-month experiences on farms and agribusinesses overseas. One student returned from a European farm in January, while four more began their experience abroad. Applications are coming in early for the WEA June, 1984 program; if interested, send in your application by the March 1, 1984, deadline.

SO MANY GOOD THINGS happened as a result of the first national SOE (Supervised Occupational Experience) workshop held in 1982, that the FFA plans to hold a follow-up meeting. Under the direction of program specialist Bob Seefeldt, the sequel SOE workshop will be held July 22-27, 1984, in Washington, D.C. with state supervisors, teacher educators and agricultural teachers in attendance. The goal: to make SOE programs more meaningful to vocational agriculture programs.

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD what a good experience it is from friends who attended; now it's your chance. FFA members interested in learning about citizenship and leadership through the Washington Conference Program should send applications to the National FFA Center by June 1, 1984. Eight week-long sessions will run June 11 through August 11 at a cost of $295 per member per session. Former National FFA Officers Mark Herndon and Jeff Kirby will lead the conference staff this year. You can find out more from a special WCP brochure that will be mailed to your chapter soon.

TRIVIA EXPERTS: DO YOU KNOW what FFA chapter had the most members in 1983? Give up? A check into the FFA's membership listings came up with the following list of the five largest chapters:

1. W.B. Saul Chapter, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - 688 members
2. Denmark Chapter, Denmark, Wisconsin - 463 members
3. Lowndes Chapter, Valdosta, Georgia - 400 members
4. Colquitt County Chapter, Moultrie, Georgia - 398 members
5. Buchannan Jr. High Chapter, Tampa, Florida - 365 members

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The Mailbag

Tupelo, Oklahoma

I just finished reading your article "One Man's Tribute" in the December-January issue. I was so proud of this article because I live in the district that Congressman Watkins represents.

We had the privilege a couple of years ago to have Mr. Watkins be the guest speaker at the local Stonewall FFA Chapter meeting. He did a fantastic job. I would love for him to appear at a future national convention. I know the young men and women who attend this convention would thoroughly enjoy this fine man speaking to them. He knows what young people are all about.

Mrs. Kenneth Fortner

Epsom, New Hampshire

I would like to tell you that the article "Keeping Vo-Ag Out Of The Dusty Corner" (October-November, 1983) was very interesting. We have started a citrus sale and we have written to three papers for public support. The article was quite helpful. Thanks for a great magazine.

Mike Agostino

Ames, Iowa

I am writing to commend you on your article by Shirley Jones in the December-January issue. The article entitled "Teaching Vocational Agriculture" was well written and contained very good information. As a freshman at Iowa State Univeristy majoring in agricultural education, I'd like to add a little advice of my own. Mr. Butcher said "Students who want to teach ag should make every effort to take as much vocational agriculture as they can." I feel that he left out one important thing. Not only should you take the vo-ag classes, but you should also be as active in FFA activities as possible. What better way to teach than from firsthand experience?

Tom Cooley

Grass Valley, California

I'm writing this letter in response to the recent item in "Facts For Action," "Dead at Seventeen." All I can say is I sure hope this article touches homes and hearts everywhere. It made its mark at our Nevada Union Chapter when we recently lost a young man in an auto accident. Our chapter grieved for days. I hope this article points out that dying isn't fun and it hurts so many. Thanks for printing "Dead At Seventeen." You may have saved many.

Carla Harms

Honkakoski, Finland

I am writing in response to the FFA's Work Experience Abroad program which I am presently participating in. I'm confused as to why a youth organization with such a wide scope and large enrollment as ours cannot produce more members who are willing to spend time working and living in a foreign country.

Yes, maybe the cost is a deterrent for many, but the lessons to be learned are priceless. Besides having gained agricultural experience, I also have a new perspective on the world, my own country and myself.

With agriculture being in the state it is today, we can't afford to underestimate our foreign markets. This program has helped me to realize that American agriculture does not stop at our borders but continues overseas and touches the lives of millions.

The personal benefits from WEA are many and unlimited, often undescribable. The knowledge I've gained during these six months will continue to help me throughout my life.

Lee Bialozynski

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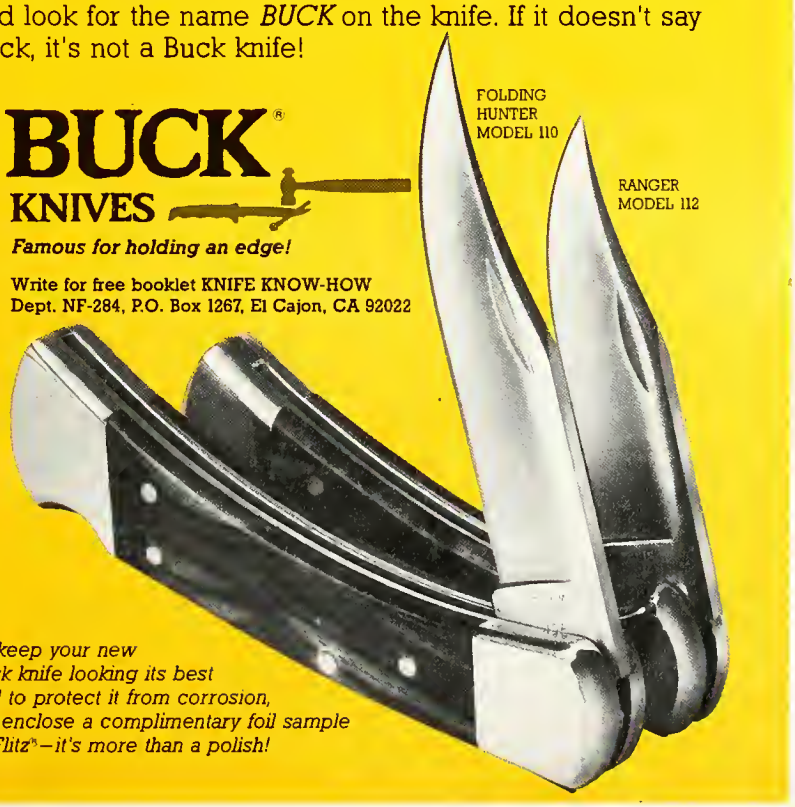

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Trends in Agriculture
Looking Ahead

A GNATTY PROBLEM: an estimated $30 million in potential U.S. exports of livestock and semen for artificial insemination are lost each year due to gnat bites on farm animals. USDA scientists say the losses occur when the gnats bite sheep and cattle, transmitting a viral disease called bluetongue. Researchers are having trouble battling the elusive disease because an infected cow or sheep may show no clinical symptoms. Bluetongue becomes obvious, and a deadly serious disease, when affected animals lose their offspring through spontaneous abortions, stillbirths and birth defects.

DON'T MISS the national celebration on Agriculture Day, set for March 20, 1984. First observed in 1973, National Agriculture Day is an annual celebration officially recognized by Congress, the President and most governors. Under the slogan "Agriculture: America's Hearbeat," the day is set aside as a time to explain and salute the achievements of the working men and women of agriculture in America. Agriculture Week, March 16-22, is an expanded opportunity in many cities and towns to increase public understanding of the vital place agriculture holds in our economy.

TUBES? SIDEWAY SILOS? Whatever they're called, plastic feed bags are starting to appear more frequently on livestock farms across the country as an alternative to conventional silo storage. According to a University of Illinois extension dairy specialist, the thick plastic tubes can accomodate 80 to 100 tons of wet forage, and storage costs of $5 to $7 a ton compare favorably to the cost per ton of conventional silos. An on-going study by Pennsylvania State University shows storing silage in plastic bags could result in a higher quality livestock feed than hay. The method is especially suited to small or part-time farmers because of lower energy, equipment and labor costs. One catch: plastic feed bags cannot be re-used and must be protected from punctures.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT farm safety: the National Safety Council's recently published *Accident Facts, 1983 Edition* says the death rate per 100,000 farm and ranch residents was 58.7 in 1982, the lowest since 1961 when a major change was made in defining a farm. Some 3,300 farm and ranch residents lost their lives in accidents in 1982, while an estimated 300,000 residents suffered disabling injuries.

ILLEGAL FOREIGN workers make up a significant part of the U.S. hired farm labor force, according to a recent issue of USDA'S *FARMLINE* magazine. Comprehensive statistics on their numbers are not available, but officials monitor the flow of illegal aliens by the number of arrests made each year by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. In 1982 more than 100,000 illegal aliens working in agricultural occupations were apprehended.

FARMING IS NO LONGER the principal occupation of rural residents, according to USDA. Recent statistics on farm families indicate that in eight of the last ten years, *off-farm* income has been *greater* than net farm income for these families. Off-farm income was twice as high as net farm income in 1981, with net farm income declining for a second year after reaching a high of $11,002 per operator family in 1979.

THE ASIAN CONNECTION: a record high 32.5 percent of all ag exports are now shipped to markets in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China, Russia and the middle east. In 1981, U.S. farmers shipped a record-high $14.2 billion of agricultural products to the continent. U.S. agricultural officials have long been aware of the tremendous market potential in these countries, but only in recent years have they seen those markets become reality. For example, thanks to incredible economic growth, Japan purchased $6.7 billion worth of American farm goods in 1981. Future market growth seems inevitable: six of every ten persons living on the earth are found in Asia, and China alone has a population of more than one billion, a fourth of the world total.

ABOUT HALF OF AMERICA'S farmlands are farmed by someone other than the owner, according to USDA statistics. "Absentee ownership," as it is referred to, has increased from one-third in 1954 to about one-half today, and the trend seems to still be rising. Problem is, this movement may have a poor effect on soil and water conservation. "Soil conservation treatment on rented land lags behind that of owner-operated land, and soil erosion rates are higher as a result," says Bud Mekelburg, president of the National Association of Conservation Districts. He says it's because conservation investments are long-term in nature, and often pay back little to the farm operator in the short term.

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The NRA Hunter's Code of Ethics emphasizes safety, good sportsmanship and wildlife conservation. It is an essential part of the training materials that the NRA provides to hunter safety instructors in all fifty states. If you would like to join the NRA and want more information about our programs and benefits, write Harlon Carter, Executive Vice President, P.O. Box 37484, Dept. RR-26, Washington, D.C. 20013.

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Farm Strategies For 1984

Farming success this year will require more marketing and production skills than ever before. Our team of ag experts have mapped out a winning game plan that should make 1984 a profitable year for you and your supervised occupational experience program.

WHEN you come right down to it, the fine art of farming is like a sport. To win, you follow a solid game plan, play your best players and most important, stick to a certain strategy in order to come out ahead in the end.

The 1983 growing season demanded it: faced with tough decisions from the very beginning with USDA's Payment-In-Kind program, farmers faced an endless series of choices and strategies to "PIK" from. For many, the summer drought stretched their farm game plan to the limit.

Now it's 1984, and with the new year comes new challenges and different rules to play by. In general, a stronger economy and a lighter carryover of stocks, due to the PIK program, should make this year a good year for many farmers.

To help you plan for this year's winning game plan, we've come up with some farm strategy of our own. Top ag experts, utilizing experience and analyses, offer the following supply and price outlook for several commodities which FFA members are most likely to be involved in this year. Of course, we know predictions, especially in agriculture, should be taken with a grain of salt. No matter how accurate the prediction or how helpful the advice, success comes down to one thing: efficient, smart management practices in your SOE program. It's the *one* thing *all* the experts agree on.

So take a look at this farm strategy section for 1984. Then cut it out and post it near the record keeping file or the floppy discs. It may help you win big this year.

Hogs

U.S. pork production during 1983 was about 6 percent above a year earlier, but still 5 percent below 1981, a peak production year. Feeding was unprofitable for almost every month in 1983, resulting in a reduction in the breeding herd. Main reason: weak prices. Barrow and gilt prices likely averaged $47 per cwt, down *15 percent from a year earlier.*

Photo Courtesy USDA

Because of continued high feed costs and weak prices, producers have likely reduced breeding inventory and farrowed fewer sows these past two months. These reductions will begin to show on the price board soon, probably averaging $45 to $49 in the second quarter of the year.

The time to be ready for will be the second half of the year, when hog prices may average $50 to $56 per cwt, compared to $43 to $44 in 1983. Lower pork (as low as 6 to 8 percent below 1983) and beef production will be the cause, along with improving personal incomes as the economy continues to grow.

Soybeans

The season-average U.S. farm price will likely reach $8.50 to $9.50 per bushel this year, up from last year's $5.57 per bushel. This is a result of the 31 percent drop in U.S. soybean production last year. Even with beginning stocks of 387 million bushels, total supplies are still forecast at 1.9 billion bushels, down 23 percent from last year.

U.S. soybean acreage could range between 70 and 73 million acres in 1984, causing production to exceed 2.2 billion bushels.

World soybean stocks at the end of 1984 are expected to be about 9.4 million tons, a drop of about 7.8 million from a year earlier.

High prices will reduce use. The soybean "crush," for processed beans, is forecast at 975 million bushels, a decline of 12 percent from last year. Soybean exports are projected to decline 20 percent.

Factors to watch out for in this year's price pattern: how tightly farmers hold their 1983 harvest, the pace of exports and livestock slaughter, the corn price pattern and most importantly, the 1984 production prospects.

Cotton

Reflecting a continued recovery in the world economy and renewed demand for textile products, world cotton consumption in 1984 is projected at 69.3 million bales, an increase of nearly 2 million from last season. About 90 percent of this increase is targeted in China, the United States, the Soviet Union and India.

Domestically, the U.S. cotton supply for 1984 was expected down 17 percent from a year earlier. But total *use* of U.S.

(Continued on next Page)

Farm Strategies

(Continued from Page 11)

cotton is forecast up nearly a million bales from last year, the increase coming from both stronger exports and higher mill use. Production difficulties in the USSR and Pakistan have strengthened exports, while growing incomes and changing consumer tastes have boosted mill use.

The outlook for U.S. cotton supply for 1984/85 is expected to be more abundant than the last two years. That, coupled with sluggish export growth may cause prices to stay more near the ending year 1982 price of 68 cents a pound, than the mid-November 1983 price of 89 cents a pound. Remember: normally, prices decline somewhat during harvest but then rise from December through July. But studies from past years indicate that prices may fall *following* the harvest season.

Cattle

Despite record U.S. meat supplies, a stronger economy has helped support beef prices. Prices of choice fed steers at Omaha likely averaged slightly below $62.50 per cwt in 1983, the third consecutive year in which prices averaged in the low $60's.

Beef production is expected to decline 3 to 4 percent in 1984. Cattle marketings will decline moderately this spring, with sharper decreases likely this summer. As meat supplies decline, look for prices to rise to the upper $60's this spring. Possible further declines in supplies in the second half of the year, coupled with continued economic improvement, should hold prices for fed steers between the mid to upper-60's next summer and fall.

Prices will likely decline modestly late next fall, as meat supplies rise seasonally. However, each 100,000-head increase in dairy cow slaughter would raise beef production 67 to 70 million pounds and would have force livestock and poultry prices down.

Dairy

In the United States, record milk production and lower commercial disappearance during 1983 weakened prices and pushed USDA purchases to a record 16 to 18 billion pounds. The outlook for this year presents nearly the same picture, but a new law, the "Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983," sets the minimum support price of milk at $12.60 per cwt until September 30, 1985.*

As a result, milk production is expected to drop substantially, while commercial disappearance will likely improve, leaving USDA purchases much smaller in 1984. Most of the production drop is expected to be caused by a decline in cow numbers, but the timing and extent of this decrease is uncertain at this time.

*(However, if on April 1, 1985, annual purchases by the Commodity Credit Corporation are projected to exceed the equivalent of six billion pounds of milk, the Secretary of Agriculture could reduce the support price by 50 cents per cwt. An additional 50-cent-per-cwt cut in the support level could be made on July 1, 1985, if annual purchases are projected to exceed five billion pounds of milk.)

Due to PIK and drought, U.S. corn production declined 50 percent last year.

Poultry and Eggs

Poultry and egg producers can look forward to lower feed costs and higher product prices in the second half of 1984 than in the first half. Feed costs should go down in the second half of the year if the outlook for the crop harvest is good.

Prices will likely be stronger in the first half of the year, but costs will also be up sharply. Specifically, broiler producers will probably see sharply higher feed costs throughout the next few months. But with plentiful supplies of red meats, broiler prices are not likely to rise as much as the increase in costs. Second quarter 1984 prices may average 48 to 52 cents per pound, up from 46 cents last year. Expect prices to peak in the 51-55 cents per pound range sometime in the third quarter.

The same cost-price squeeze which may be experienced by broiler producers may also affect turkey growers the same way. But if supplies of red meats go down in the second half of the year, prices of young hen turkeys may average 66 to 69 cents per pound, up from the 60 to 64 cents this year.

A supply decline last year helped keep egg prices stronger than usual. With smaller supplies expected in first half of 1984, egg prices may average 70 to 73 cents per dozen, up from the 67 cents per dozen in 1983. If prices of competing high protein foods increase, egg prices in the second half of 1984 may average 76 to 78 cents per dozen.

Feed Grains

U.S. corn production declined about 50 percent from last year, because of government programs and last summer's drought. The poor U.S. harvest was the lowest in 15 years. It also was a major factor in the world coarse grain output last year, which was down 13 percent.

Even though record-high beginning stocks cushioned the impact of the U.S. drop in production, farm prices for corn rose dramatically last year. The average U.S. farm price for corn is forecast at $3.40 to $3.80 per bushel for 1984, an huge increase from 1982/83's price of $2.65.

Sorghum and oat supplies were down 23 and 8 percent, respectively, from a year earlier. Barley is the only feed grain in greater supply this year. With corn prices substantially higher prices for sorghum, barley and oats will also average well above a year earlier.

With a smaller crop and global use expected to rise this year, countries will be forced to dip into stocks. Corn prices will likely remain firm, which could limit use and stimulate consumption of other grains and possibly wheat.

Wheat and Rice

U.S. production was down almost 15 percent for wheat and 33 percent for rice last year. As a result, U.S. farm prices are forecast up for both crops, because government programs and bad weather in rice areas reduced rice supplies and will likely keep wheat stocks from rising.

The average price for U.S. wheat hovered between $3.50 and $3.70 per bushel in 1984, compared with $3.53 a year earlier. For 1984/85, wheat prices could fall because of higher production and a 35-cent reduction in the loan rate for the 1984 crop.

Farm Income

Unadjusted for inflation, net farm income is forecast at $29 to $34 billion in 1984, up from 1983's estimated $22 to $24 billion and approaching recent highs of $32 billion in 1979 and $30 billion in 1981. Although net farm income is forecast up, rising cash expenses could cause net cash income to fall to $35 to $39 billion, compared with the $42 to $44 billion estimated in 1983.

The financial outlook for 1984 is generally good in the farm sector. Interest rates are expected to equal those for 1983, with perhaps some rise during the latter part of the year. Because the inflation rate is projected to remain low—5 to 6 percent—real interest rates will stay at record levels. Growth in farm debt this year will continue to be slow compared with the 1970's. Credit will be available to the farm sector, although qualifications for loans may be more stringent. •••

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On The Robinson Road

Farming cross-country can be exciting, lonely and challenging. This family trio of custom operators harvests thousands of acres of wheat and corn silage each year in the custom harvest business.

By Michael Wilson

"...On the road again, I just can't wait to get on the road again..." —a Willie Nelson song

HAL Robinson sizes up my question thoughtfully before leaning in close over the kithen table, as if about to reveal a secret. "When we go to cut silage, *we cut silage,"* he says, with a no-nonsense look all farmers save for special emphasis.

I knew immediately what he meant. I envisioned the 16-hour days, the endless trips to the grain elevator, the constant rush of the harvest as it flows methodically into trucks and grain bins across the midwest. Another grain harvest, flowing into history.

Photos by Author

Still, my imagination could not top the real-life experiences of this family trio of custom harvesters from Eskridge, Kansas. Hal, an experienced farmer, has two able-bodied sons, Kevin and Scott, who travel with him across the nation's midsection harvesting crops for midwestern farmers.

As it turned out, I was lucky to catch them home this sunny, hot August day. They had just begun their busiest time of the year—fall corn silage harvest.

"Last year I rolled the boys out of bed at 4:30 a.m.," smiles Mr. Robinson, "and we sometimes don't get done until midnight. We don't stop to eat lunch. You eat when you can."

"Between August and November we'll end up chopping 30,000 tons of corn and sargo silage," adds Kevin.

Kevin says the family's decision to begin a custom harvest service back in 1979 was a natural outlet from the home farm crop and beef cattle operation. "It's helped us pay for the cutter and we can cut our own feed too," he says. "That makes it more cost-effective. When those machines are sitting idle, it costs us five dollars a minute."

Above, left to right, Scott, Kevin and Hal Robinson of Eskridge, Kansas. Left, the three Robinsons take a break to discuss their next move.

Indeed, the trio's work schedule leaves little room for *anything* to sit idle. After their own crops are planted this spring, the Robinsons will jump right into harvesting wheat silage, beginning in May. "We started cutting wheat out in western Kansas and we were out there for four weeks before we went to Colorado for a week," says Kevin. "Then we went to Lyon, Kansas, to cut alfalfa four days for a feedlot company."

When they get a break, they harvest their own crops, which will be used to feed the Robinsons' beef cattle at the home crop and livestock farm. "Last year was the first year for us chopping wheat, mainly because of the PIK program," says Kevin. "We chopped over 2,000 acres of wheat silage between May 3 and June 20. During this time I stayed home and did the farming and caring for the cattle while Scott and Dad chopped silage in Kansas and Colorado."

The Robinsons manage to do so much partially because each member of the family is a capable, experienced operator. "Anyone of us can run any piece of machinery," adds Mr. Robinson.

Kevin and Scott were both raised to believe in the value of an honest day's work. The results have become obvious through the two young men's FFA careers. Twenty-four-year-old Kevin earned national FFA proficiency awards in both crop production and diversified livestock production before earning FFA's highest achievement, Star Farmer of America, in 1982. Younger brother Scott, 19, earned national honors this year in agricultural sales and/or service for his efforts in the family custom harvest business.

Terry Fanning, Eskridge FFA advisor, says, "I think Kevin and Scott have learned the value of the traditional American work ethic, something that not everybody today fully appreciates or works at. I think it comes down to family tradition for them—an appreciation for getting out and getting work done. I think it's been brought forward to them by example from their father."

Mr. Fanning says he stopped in at the Robinson home one wet spring day. "I figured I could catch 'em home that day since it was raining," recalls Mr. Fanning. "I talked to their mother, and she said 'The boys couldn't do anything so Kevin loaded up some grain to take to the elevator, Scott was out walking the beans and Hal was out fixing fence in the rain.'"

Adventures On The Road

When the family hits the road for a custom job, the team's John Deere cutter is put on a trailer and pulled with one of two grain trucks. The trio also pulls a service truck with an attached house trailer for overnight jobs far from home.

"One day we left Missouri in the morning and pulled in at home that evening," recalls Kevin. "The next morning we pulled out of the yard and headed for Dighton, Kansas, arriving there that evening. In two days we had hauled our trucks and machinery 550 miles."

There have been some harrowing experiences, says Scott. The family doesn't use silage wagons because of slow turnaround between field and silo. But it's not always easy to follow alongside the harvester with the grain truck—especially when the corn or wheat field is first being opened up.

"We'd like to be able to go check out some of the jobs we take on before-hand, but it's practically impossible," he says.

Then there's the danger of hidden objects in the field. "I've had to dodge big boulders and 20-year-old pieces of machinery in some fields," says Mr. Robinson.

"I started on a 40-acre field one year and I asked the customer, 'Anything in that field?' He said no, of course. I chopped the outside and started down through the middle as fast as that cutter would run, turned around to see if the truck was still behind me, looked back around again and right there in front of me was an *irrigation well*," he recalls.

"You run into all kinds of deals."

To take some of the anxiety out of harvesting, the Robinsons had a $3,200 metal detector installed on their latest grain cutter. "It's expensive, but it can pay for itself in saving costs of new knives," says Mr. Robinson. "One set of knives can range between $400 and $900, and the cutter itself costs over $100,000."

Both Kevin and Scott have enough experience on the road to know there's both good and bad points to the business. "You get to meet a lot of new people across the country," says Scott. "You get to see a lot of country, new things, see ways other people harvest and farm."

"The thing I really enjoy and what makes it all worthwhile is sitting in that cutter and watching that 25-30 ton per acre irrigated corn go through the cutter and pile up in the silage trucks," says Kevin with a smile.

Weeks and weeks away from home can take its toll, both physically and mentally, though. Kevin says one time the trio took a job in a remote, isolated corner of Nebraska—40 miles from the nearest town. "It was literally the only town in the county," he recalls.

"Sometimes the days seem to get longer," he points out. "You're always away from home and your friends for a long period of time. You sit there in the cutter or truck for 12-15 hours, day after day by yourself, and you're bound to get fatigued and lonesome."

Still, the brothers encourage others to get involved in a custom harvesting work crew. "In three months of work you will learn how to drive a truck, operate a combine or cutter, make adjustments, learn how to repair equipment, learn how to work with people and also make a good wage for yourself," says Kevin.

"Don't be discouraged by the hard work or the long hours, because it's all part of the job," he adds. "Just knowing you were an important part of that custom harvesting crew is an experience you'll never forget."

The Robinsons are already gearing up for the 1984 harvest season. They've laid plans to buy two new combines for the wheat harvest and one more silage cutter for the fall. The harvesting business has grown so much since it's start in 1979 that the Robinsons went out and purchased a microcomputer to handle the overflow of bookkeeping, plus the brothers' supervised occupational experience records.

"I can keep five years of records on the computer, where it used to take ten file cabinets," laughs Kevin. "I'm looking forward to being able to use telecomputing in transferring information back and forth."

The new computer set-up is another example of the family's commitment to new and better methods of farming and management. That commitment—coupled with hard work—gives them the success most farm families are still striving to achieve.

Meanwhile, the Robinson family will be out on the road again, heading for another custom cutting job in another part of the midwest. . . •••

Right, a familiar sight wherever the Robinson trio goes. Says Kevin: "You're always away from your home and friends . . . you're bound to get fatigued and lonesome."

Highlights of The FFA Year

As the following news items indicate, 1983 was a year of excitement and transition for FFA. These events were just a few of the highlights that made it a year to remember

PSA Campaign Puts Spotlight on FFA

1983 will be remembered as the year plans were laid for the first-ever national Public Service Campaign (PSA) for the Future Farmers of America. The announcements, which will be seen and heard on radio, television and print media this year during FFA WEEK, call for strong nationwide support for vocational agriculture and vocational education. Actor Eddie Albert, long-time FFA supporter, donated his time to act as FFA spokesperson.

Presidential Praises at The White House

"The Future Farmers of America does more than give a good start to some fine young people. By cultivating skills and patriotism, it ensures the strength and vitality of our country," said President Ronald Reagan at a White House summer gathering of FFA state and national officers and adult leaders. This was the third consecutive annual visit FFA members have had with the president since his election, signifying strong support of vocational agriculture from the current administration.

New Awards, New Opportunities

It was a year of changes and new ideas for the FFA in the area of contests and awards. A new "Computers in Agriculture" award program was introduced late in the year, which will recognize FFA members on the chapter, state and national levels for their farm and agribusiness management skills utilized through a computer. State winners will be sent to a national seminar on Computers in Agriculture next August in Washington, D.C. In an unrelated move, the National FFA Board took steps to initiate a new national Forestry contest and to eliminate the national Poultry judging contest and national Milk Quality and Dairy Foods judging contest by 1985.

National FFA Foundation Still Growing

Facing troubled financial times on the farm, it looked doubtful last year that the National FFA Foundation could possibly match the $1.4 million raised one year earlier. But tough times were not enough to hold back the relentless financial backing of agribusinesses and FFA supporters in 1983, as they contributed a record-high $1.56 million to FFA members and their programs, plus an additional $1.6 million in committments through the Foundation's deferred giving program. This kind of continual support once again demonstrates how important the FFA is to the U.S. agricultural community.

The 56th National Convention Was a Winner

Under the new FFA theme, "Keeping America On The Grow," over 23,000 enthusiastic FFA members converged on Kansas City, Missouri for three days of business, contests, award presentations and enlightening speeches from FFA and entertainment personalities. This year, the convention was held under the leadership of FFA's first female president, Jan Eberly. And Willard Scott, well-known weatherman from NBC's TODAY Show, broadcasted four live weather reports from the convention stage to 20 million viewers.

New FFA Scholarship Program Introduced

For the first time in history, the national FFA organization now offers educational scholarships to FFA members through the new "National College and Vocational/Technical School Scholarship Program." FFA members who are seniors in high school or out-of-school members preparing to enroll in their first year of higher education are eligible to receive the scholarships, which are for one year and are not renewable. In light of mushrooming tuition costs at many academic institutions across the country, national FFA leaders are predicting the new program will become an important financial help for college-bound FFA members, while also providing incentive for higher academic achievements among FFA members in the vo-ag classroom.

National FFA Advisor Retires

After a lifetime of service to vocational agriculture and vocational education, National Advisor Byron Rawls retired from his role as adult leader of the Future Farmers of America, after five years of service at that position. He was the sixth individual to serve as National Advisor of the FFA, and only the second former FFA member. At press time no appointment had been made to fill the position.

BOAC Holds First Conference

The Building Our American Communities (BOAC) program of the FFA held a first-ever conference on community development in Washington, D.C. last year. The Conference recognized outstanding FFA members from 50 states for achievements in volunteerism and individual contributions to top-notch BOAC projects back at their local FFA chapters. Winners shared $2,650 in awards to be used for their chapters' 1984 BOAC projects.

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Top, Brian Bachman shows his skills with the forklift; above, apples at the Bachman orchard are all hand-picked, one reason why the fruit looks so inviting (right).

The Sunny Hill Tradition

If there's anything farmers worry about more, it's frost and how to deal with it. But for some growers—fruit growers in particular—early or late frost can be a killer.

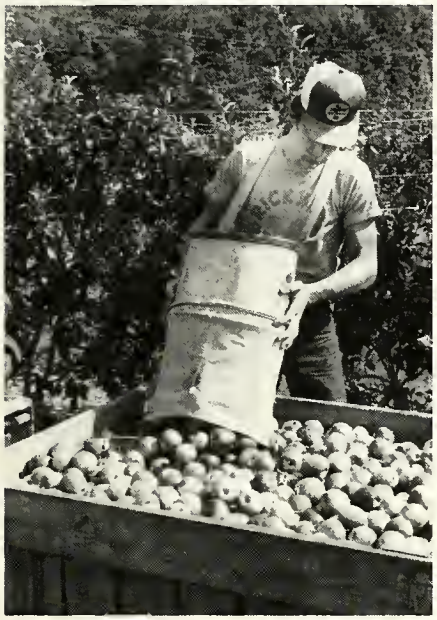
Brian Bachman, 20-year-old FFA'er from Carroll, Ohio, knows from experience what effect the weather can have on growing apples—even just a few, freezing hours.

Brian plans to produce apples for a living—and he's made a good start for himself at his family's "Sunny Hill Fruit Farm," where 140 acres of trees and assorted vines produce mostly apples and other fruits and vegetables. Things go pretty smoothly at Sunny Hill. But one cool day last spring left a lasting mark on the 1983 apple crop. Brian remembers the day vividly:

"On May 9th we had about four hours of 25-degree weather," he recalls. "The weather forecast was for much warmer temperatures for this night, so we weren't prepared to fight the freezing temperatures. As a result of those four hours, our crop last year was really light—only 17,500 bushels, compared to 53,000 bushels in 1982."

But predicting the weather, as any

Below, Brian shows how the hand-picked apples are loaded into crates before being processed or stored in the Bachmans' 36,000 bushel storage bin.



Below, the Bachman orchard is kept disease-free and healthy through a consistent spray-management program.

farmer knows, is a losing proposition. And although it can do short-run damage to a crop, Brian knows that good management and planning are the keys to long-range success, especially in the apple business. This family knows all about long-range success — their apple orchards have been weathering the frost and storms now for over four generations of Bachmans.

A former state fruit and/or vegetable proficiency winner and Ohio's recent candidate for FFA Star Agribusinessman, Brian works as a manager of the orchard alongside his father Richard, mom Joann and older brother Gregg. The Bachman orchards produce mostly Red, Golden Delicious, Jonathan and Rome apples, which are sold either in five-pound plastic bags or sent through the Bachman's apple cider mill to make apple cider.

Up until recently, the family owned a retail market where they sold much of their produce. Now, their main source is through a statewide marketing firm established strictly for growers like themselves.

"It's like a cooperative," explains Brian. "It's one uniform price. That way, all the growers aren't trying to cut each other's throat."

On a smaller scale, Brian says he got good marketing experience when he established a "pick-your-own" strawberry market, as one of his first SOE (Supervised Occupational Experience) programs. He used the profits to buy equipment to raise other crops.

Like most smart managers, the family has set up a long-range plan for the family business. Brian says, "The farm plan calls for a constant renovation of the orchard. We replace old or undesirable varieties of trees with new trees and better qualities. That way we strive to maintain the best quality and maximum production levels."

Quality starts with the trees—and one way to maintain quality is seeing that the orchard is pruned properly each year in January and February, no small task considering there are 140 acres of trees to think about. It helps, says Brian, to have three self-propelled hydraulic pruners to get the job done.

"After pruning we spray the trees with a 'dormant' oil, when the leaves are a half-inch green," he says. "It's an oil that covers the whole tree and smothers any mite eggs or other insects that might be dormant over winter." The family also takes blight-prevention measures at this time which may explain the orchard's long-running history of disease-free apple production.

Apple-picking begins in July and won't let up until October. All produce is hand-picked for fresh fruit and grocery-selling. A crew of 10-15 migrant workers is hired, often coming to Ohio from the Florida citrus harvest. During this busy time Brian drives the delivery truck, hauling, stacking and general supervision of the workers and packing line.

"I keep the workers supplied with the necessary materials so that all the packing processes are performed," he says. The packing line is semi-automatic: apples are sized, washed, waxed, bagged and weighed. Some are sent to the Bachman's cold storage bin, which can hold 36,000 bushels of apples until market delivery.

For cider, the family uses rejected apples that may be slightly damaged and not acceptable to groceries or other buyers. Brian says, "The cider is kept in 1,200 gallon bulk coolers, then bottled when needed. We bottle 3,500 gallons of cider per week."

Presently, Brian has been put in charge of the latest addition to the orchard: a 40-acre lot of new apple trees, first planted in 1978 and first harvested in 1982. He helped develop this acreage, selecting rootstock and planting distances.

Brian is an optimist. He's anticipating a good year in 1984—frost or no frost. Judging by his attitude and dedication, it's obvious that battling the weather is not the only lesson Brian has learned about growing apples since he began work in the orchard. He's been learning his lessons well ever since he was small. His family has established themselves as a top-notch producer in the area, marked by enthusiasm, dedication to their work and a long-standing pride in successful family tradition. Brian plans to follow in that tradition—and that's probably one of the best lessons he'll *ever* learn. •••

How To Get A's In Ag*

(*or any other class)

By Becky Vining

STUDYING, yechh! Who needs it, right?

No one ever claimed studying and homework was the most exciting part of vo-ag—or any other class for that matter. But take heart, book-weary FFA members: a few moments mastering these simple study secrets today can reap big rewards later when the all-important grades are added up.

If it's any comfort, most students suffer from the same problems when it comes to studying. Do you develop a case of the "butterflies" before taking a test? Do you read assignments, yet can't remember a bit of it the next morning? Do you always seem to run out of time for homework?

A "yes" answer to any of these questions means you're with plenty of company—millions of other students. The key to solving these problems, and others, is to develop good study skills. Those students who *have* learned such skills usually end up with better grade point averages, scholarships and eventually, job offers.

"Studying is a talent that students will use throughout life," says Mike Womochil, FFA Advisor from Kankato, Kansas. Scott Harms, FFA member from Canby, Oregon, can vouch for that statement—he was recently accepted into the honors program at Iowa State University to study pre-veterinary medicine next fall.

"Students don't have much time, so they need to learn to manage it wisely," says Scott. "Study times should be planned to be beneficial, rather than just here and there and dragging it out. Study hard, but then take time to reward yourself."

"Proper study skills prepares you for good work habits and management skills," says Therese Hebert, a former FFA member from Assumption, Illinois, now a senior studying agricultural education at the University of Illinois. "Good grades can help students get jobs."

Yet, most students suffer from poor study habits and need help improving them, says Richard Owens, former director of Educational Improvement at Kansas State University.

One ability that helps students overcome these problems is reading. You may not realize how important reading ability is to success in the classroom—but half of what you learn is from reading. To improve your reading ability, Dr. Owen suggests four steps:

1. Always "preview" the material, looking it over before you begin reading. Rather than start in on page one, take a minute to become familiar with what you'll be reading about. If the section includes a summary, read it first; it often outlines the material.

2. Think seriously about what you're reading. Try to relate to the text, agree or disagree with the thoughts—but do something that forces you to get involved in the assignment.

3. Always force yourself to read as rapidly as possible. Along with increasing your reading speed, you will probably develop better comprehension and understanding of the material.

4. Review, reflect and recall. Spend as much time thinking about what you read as you spent actually reading it. Try outlining it, condensing it or testing yourself over it. This forces your mind to really think about what you've read.

The reading ability you develop through this plan will help you become a more efficient studier, one who can complete assignments in the required time with little effort.

But efficiency also depends on utilizing short breaks during the day. An hour for study period between classes is an ideal time to study. For example, if you study one hour each day for five days, you'll actually learn twice as much as if you study five hours straight. If you must hold a "marathon" study session, take a short break or switch subjects each hour to revive and relax your mind.

Sticking to a study schedule will also help you become an efficient studier. Plan to study a certain subject for a specific length of time each week so there's enough time for everything.

Taking careful notes in class also increases your studying ability. If possible, scan the textbook before class to get a preview of the material.

Use judgment when taking notes. You can think twice as fast as your teacher can speak, but he can talk five or six times faster than you can write. This means you must be selective about what you make notes on during class. Note the key words and expressions during the class discussion; then go back and fill in missing holes as soon as possible.

Thorough notes will be a great help when it's test time.

Being Prepared

There's no substitution for feeling prepared when taking a test, so complete notes, comprehended readings and efficient study habits are the solution. "Cramming" and "pulling all-nighters" only help in short-range learning. These study methods are inefficient and anxiety-producing, often causing you to lose sleep and alertness.

To be prepared for the test, anticipate. Listen to your teacher's cues about what might be on the test—what points are repeated, which pages of the text are mentioned and how much time is spent on each section.

Knowing what kind of test it is will also reduce your tension. Most students adapt their study style to prepare for different types of questions. Memorizing may help in fill-in-the-blank or matching tests, but it's poor for essay, multiple choice or true-false questions. For these, review the material more broadly and over a longer period of time.

One of the most important steps in preparing for a test is getting help when you need it. Ask your teacher—who will note your extra effort and probably be glad to help you prepare for the test.

Even if you follow all these study suggestions, though, something might be lacking in the learning process—attitude. No mater how well your teacher lectures, how much material you comprehend or how prepared you are for the test, if your attitude is bad, you lose.

On the other hand, think of the pride (not to mention scholarships) you'll feel when you get that "straight A" report card back at the end of the year.

Now go out and impress your fellow classmates. Class dismissed. •••

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"Without middlemen, we'd be sitting down to a lunch of wheat and peanuts instead of a slice of whole wheat bread smeared with peanut butter."

Agricultural Processing

By Shirley Jones

EVER since Americans started griping about high food prices, the term "middleman" has been an unpopular name. When consumers said their daily bread was costing way too much, producers said, "It's not our fault. It's the middleman that makes your grocery bill so high."

That accusation may have been as unfair as pinning the blame on producers. "Middlemen" are responsible for getting agricultural products from farm to table. Without them, we'd be sitting down to a lunch of wheat and peanuts instead of a slice of whole wheat bread smeared with peanut butter. A world without the people who process our food is a pretty unappetizing thought.

Many job opportunities exist in food processing, says Scott Rombach, director of public relations for Campbell's Soup Company.

"From the time we contract to grow the ingredients to the time the consumer buys the product, there are many jobs that have to be performed," says Mr. Rombach. At Campbell's, he says, "We hire 42,000 people world-wide and 31,000 in the United States. There have to be fieldmen to check on the crops, people to deliver the products, workers in the factory to prepare and package the food and many others."

When you consider the number of agricultural product companies in the United States, there is little doubt about the demand for people to fill positions ranging from assembly line work to management.

One FFA member from Spring, Texas, has been exploring the possiblities for a career in ag processing. Lyndell Fishback, the 1983 national proficiency award winner in agricultural processing, worked in a meat plant for three and one half years. He enjoyed his work so much he's now working toward a degree in food and fiber at Texas A&M University.

His program requires classes in science and animal science. Lyndell hopes to participate in meats judging as he did while a member of the Spring FFA Chapter.

Lyndell's experience at the processing plant included some routine tasks. "I used to cut up carcasses, wait on customers and grind meat," he says. While the days could seem long when performing the same task, there was an over-riding positive side: the feeling that he was doing something important.

"We did lots of custom work," he says, "which means butchering, cutting and wrapping the meat exactly as the customer wanted it done. Doing it right was a real feeling of accomplishment."

Others agree that food processing is a satisfying career because it meets a very basic need in our society. "I've never been involved in an industry that is as important to the country as this one is," says Roger Coleman, of the National Food Processor's Association. "There are issues of great public importance that we all have to be concerned about: food safety, nutrition, farmland and water use, energy and farm and migrant labor." Couple those with the need for providing enough food at the right time at the right place and you'll see there is a great need for people who wish to be involved in food processing.

Mr. Coleman says the demand is high for good people. "I run into people all the time whose first job was in a canning factory in high school," he says. There is potential for advancement by taking college courses in marketing, sales, advertising and production. However, jobs are available for virtually all educational levels in the food processing industry.

Compared to other fields, the processing industry offers steady employment. In canning, for instance, Mr. Coleman says, "The industry remains strong because people will always buy canned food. The profits are not extraordinary, but it is a steady performer."

What kind of skills do you need to succeed in the field? Mr. Rombach says Campbell's looks for people with integrity who gain satisfaction from helping people feed themselves. "It is a good feeling to see the finished product when it rolls off the line. Everybody adds their own skills to the product, so it demands some pride in what you are doing," he adds.

High school students who are interested in the field should get as much part-time experience as they can. That experience, along with participation in contests such as meats judging and award competitions such as the agricultural proficiency award in ag processing are naturals for providing skills that can help you get a job later on. After all, somebody has to make sure you get a bowl of Frosted Flakes for breakfast instead of a bowl of field corn. •••

Shirley Jones is a former FFA State Officer, WCP counselor and National FFA information intern. She currently works as Director of Communications for Agri Business Associates in Indianapolis, Indiana.

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Careers in Agriculture:

Top Answers to Tough Questions

Whether you're headed for production agriculture or agribusiness, planning for the future poses many questions for FFA members. Here's some no-nonsense answers to some of the most-asked questions you'll face as you begin deciding on a career in agriculture.

Q. I'm afraid I'll wind up in a field I don't like. What's the best way to find a career I'll be happy with?

A. This is a common concern among vo-ag students. No one wants to prepare for a career they won't like. And of course, no one can guarantee you'll end up in the perfect career field even after the most careful consideration.

Most vo-ag teachers say the best way to begin deciding on a career field is through developing interests by finding out about as many career areas as you can. That way you'll be able to relate your activities to a career field. One FFA member, for example, realized she had an interest in a career in turf and landscape management—but only after she became a member of the horticulture team and found out what turf and landscape had to offer.

Pay attention in ag class—it's a great place to start developing those interests. "Our first year of vo-ag covers a mass of different subjects," says Steve Hickey, Shenandoah, Indiana, FFA advisor. "We spend two weeks on crops, two weeks on livestock, two weeks on small engines, a week of welding—nothing exact, just enough to give them an idea of what they want to pick and choose from for the next three and a half years."

Most vo-ag teachers are willing to go out of their way to help you decide what areas of agriculture interest you most. "A lot of ag teachers talk about high IQ's in students," says Mr. Hickey, "but you give me one FFA member that demonstrates *interest*—and I'll build on the rest of it. I'll work seven days a week, umpteen hours of the day, because that student knows what his interest is and, eventually, where his goals lie." Joe Yedlik, FFA advisor from the North Linn, Iowa, FFA Chapter, says, "I try to introduce my students to as many things as possible, and not necessarily in a formal way in the classroom—but by taking them out in the real world, to judging contests, field trips or a barrow show. It can't all be done in the classroom."

Q. What's the next step? Even if I'm interested in selling feed, for example, I've never been quite sure what it is a feed salesman does.

A. After you've narrowed your interests to a few specific career areas, you should begin talking with people already involved in the profession. If you're interested in becoming a feed salesman, why not spend a day with one? That salesman will be flattered that you want to find out more about his profession. And you're sure to find out what kinds of things a feed salesman does for a living. Ask frank questions—what does he enjoy most about his job? What does he least like about it? This is one of the best ways to find out about the day-to-day activities of any profession.

HICKEY: "The fact remains the majority of students don't think about what they're going to do for a living until May of their senior year, when graduation is in front of them. It takes an exceptional student to be serious enough to know there will come a day when he will have to make a decision and plan for 30 or 40 years of a working life."

Q. When should I begin deciding on a career? I just got into high school, and the last thing I want to worry about today is making a living ten years from now.

A. You can never begin too soon. No doubt it's hard to concentrate on something that seems so distant, but look at it this way: right now you're on the tail end of 12 to 15 years of education—a very short period in your life compared to 40 or 50 years spent earning your daily keep. It's never too early to start planning.

On the other hand, there's no sense in trying to nail down your interests when they're constantly changing. Exploration is what these early years are for.

You'll be better off keeping career choices in the back of your mind as you go through daily schedules of classes and activities. Later, when you enter your junior and senior years, start narrowing those choices and deciding on a plan to reach your career goal.

Many high school students suffer from a false sense of security when they put off major decisions like choosing a profession. "I start preaching for them to try to choose that career area the second I get them as a freshman," says Mr. Hickey, "because the fact remains the majority of students don't think about what they're going to do for a living until May of their senior year, when graduation is in front of them."

Suddenly, the graduating senior is faced with the fact he or she lacks the training or basic requirements necessary for entry-level positions or further education.

"It takes an exceptional student to be serious enough to know there *will* come a day when he will *have* to make a decision and plan for 30 or 40 years of a working life," Mr. Hickey adds. "The student that's serious enough to try to plan for that, even if he changes his mind later, is still going to be more successful than the student who waits until the last of May in his senior year."

Q. How do I decide if I need more education after high school?

A. This is another good argument for

making your career decisions early. Ultimately, the field you choose will guide your needs for higher education. For example, you'll need relatively little additional training to become a veterinary assistant; but a great deal more education to become a veterinarian.

The following chart outlines typical education needs for common agricultural occupations. This may give you some direction in the field you're interested in, but it is by no means a rigid guide. A good example is production agriculture:

Typical Education Requirements For Common Agricultural Positions

High School Education	Technical School Education	Junior College Education	Four-Year College Education	More
Farmer	Farmer	Farmer	Farmer	Veterinarian
Ag Processor	Ag Processor	Ag Processor	Ag Engineer	Ag Engineer
Ag Mechanic	Ag Mechanic	Ag Mechanc	Extension Agent	Ag Lawyer
	Vet Assistant	Vet Assistant	Ag Teacher	Ag Researcher
	Feedlot Manager	Feedlot Manager	Ag Banker	
	Ag Salesman	Ag Salesman	Ag Salesman	
Nurseryman		Nurseryman	Nurseryman	
Farm Laborer			Ag Communicator	
Auctioneer		Auctioneer	Park Ranger	
		Farm Manager	Farm Manager	
			Ag Economist	

some FFA members find successful careers in farming with four-year college degrees, and some are quite successful with only a high school degree.

If you're unsure where you're headed, it's best to get as much education as possible—as soon as possible—for you may not have the same opportunities for advanced education later in life due to family and job responsibilities.

Q. What will a degree in agriculture cost?

A. Costs vary greatly among colleges and states. For a four year public university, plan on spending between $5,000 and $8,000 per year, which includes tuition, room and board, books and fees, entertainment and other necessary supplies. If your heart is set on attending a university or college outside of your state, prepare for a shock. Costs for out-of-state tuition at most colleges are usually much higher.

There *are* ways to offset college costs. The new FFA Scholarship Award program, recently announced by the national FFA organization, offers scholarships to deserving college-bound FFA members nationwide. It's just one of many scholarships you could earn.

Plus, prospects for part-time employment usually are greatest at agricultural institutions, because ag schools must hire people to care for plants, livestock, poultry and other living things used in teaching and research. And student loans, based on family need, are usually available. You can get more specific cost figures by writing to the dean of agriculture or director of admissions at the college or university of your choice.

Q. What if I decide I need a four-year education but can't go to a four year college or university right away?

A. "Junior colleges are a good option for students who still want to work on the farm while they continue their education," says Bill Fortschneider, vo-ag instructor in Jacksonville, Illinois. "They're also good for those who can't afford higher tuition and boarding costs at a university by living at home; or for those who aren't sure what they want to do for a living yet."

Community (junior) colleges can be seen more and more frequently because of the convenience and reasonably high-quality education students can receive. Here, you can complete basic requirements like chemistry or English, while qualifying to transfer to a four-year institution after one or two years, where you can finish studying in your specific career area. Some students enroll at junior colleges expecting to transfer, but end up satisfied with a two-year degree after deciding on a career field which allows for that amount of education.

If a community college is in your future and you want to transfer to a four-year school, make sure you arrange to have your courses transfer smoothly from one institution to the next. Many a student has lost junior college credits because he or she found out too late that the four-year institution would not accept them, and there's nothing worse than having to repeat a class you've already worked hard to pass.

Q. What about careers in production agriculture? Is it really as difficult to get into farming as everyone says?

A. That's a tough question, with no concrete answer. Many times it depends on the area you live in. For example, more opportunities to farm exist in high production states like Iowa, California or Texas, than in smaller, more urban states like Massachusetts or Connecticut.

In general, the term "future farmer" applies to less and less vo-ag students these days. Many vo-ag students are choosing careers in agribusiness fields because of the broad opportunities.

"When I look at students who have graduated in the last five years, I find very few who are actually farming," says John Elliott, FFA advisor from Ozark, Missouri. "As teachers, we need to tell students the facts of working life on *availability* of careers in farming. Half my students now want to be involved in production agriculture, but only 5 percent of them may end up actually on the farm.

"We sometimes have to help students modify their goals to fit reality," he says.

On the other hand, opportunities for farming careers do exist. We live in a country with vast agricultural resources and thousands of acres of productive farms in need of capable farmers. But a successful entry into this career field requires long-range planning, beginning *now*. And it also may require some sacrifices, like taking on a part-time job elsewhere while you become established.

As a vo-ag student, you have two strong attributes going for you: the knowledge acquired throughout four years of vo-ag instruction, and the motivation to achieve through FFA. That motivation has helped change thousands of would-be farmers into bonafide, *established* farmers—simply by giving them the desire to achieve and accomplish their goals.

Q. In general, will agriculture be a good career in the future?

A. Chances are it will be among the best. Research indicates the demand for people educated and trained in agriculture will continue to increase throughout the coming years. According to a USDA report, the total average annual *demand* for college-educated graduates in food and agricultural sciences is expected to exceed the available supply by *15 percent* through the next three years.

The report also says the most extensive shortages will be in the fields of agricultural engineering, agricultural business management, food sciences and plant sciences. An oversupply of four-year degree recipients is anticipated through the next five years in some natural resource positions, wildlife managment, forest recreation and agricultural communications.

Those who pursue a career in agriculture will have the satisfaction of contributing to the solution of the major problems of our time—hunger, environmental quality and world peace.•••

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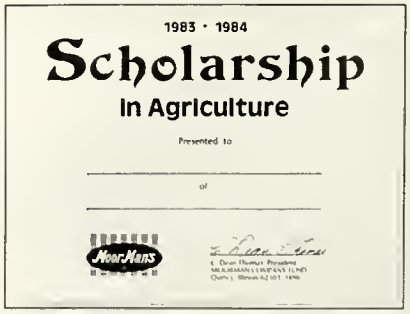
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Welcome To The Computer Age

ONCE upon a time not long ago, farming was a simpler matter. You scratched a hole in the earth, dropped a seed, covered it over and looked to the sky for gentle rains and plenty of sunshine.

Then things started getting complicated. We added tractors, genetic hybrids, artificial insemination — new tools to help farmers produce more food and fiber. The farmer faced a new set of challenges—he not only needed muscle, he now needed facts and figures, data, and management skills. He began scratching figures with a feather pen by light of candle. And today, some farmers sit down at a shiny metal box to take care of farm records and decision-making by light of a computer screen.

The decade of the '80s will long be remembered for several changes, but none have made as spectacular an affect on agriculture as the computer explosion.

The "computer-age" is no longer coming—it's *here*. It's happening everywhere: in farm homes, agribusinesses and yes, vocational agriculture classrooms.

But like tractors or hybrids, the computer is not a miracle sent from heaven. When used properly, it's a very effective (sometimes amazing) tool that can aid farmers and agribusinessmen by providing information, and by helping them make good management decisions. But it is *only* a tool. Computers may be in your presence now, and there's little doubt that they are in your future. But in and of themselves, they are not the future—*you* are the future.

That's why we're featuring this "Computers in Agriculture," special section of *The National FUTURE FARMER.* Inside we'll take a close look at this new management tool, its affects on agriculture, the future, and some practical advise for "coping" with the computer age. What kind of impact will the computer have on the Future Farmers of America? On agriculture? One thing is for sure — success or failure will rest largely upon the next generation of people involved in agriculture: you. The future. •••

Text by K. Elliott Nowels
Edited and Designed by
Michael Wilson

Photos by Bill Stagg

Above, some experts say 50 percent of U.S. farmers will use computers by 1989.

Farm Computers: What Lies Ahead?

More and more farmers are getting "computerized" these days, but it remains to be seen how far this new management tool will take agriculture.

THEY began as tall sheet metal boxes, packed with circuits, tubes and wires. They were huge devices, taking up entire floors of buildings.

Now some pack all of that power into the space of a briefcase.

What we're talking about is, of course, the computer. The heralded, heavily-advertised "magic box." And it's finding its way quickly into many jobs in the industry of agriculture.

But it's not magic, stress computer experts. It's simply another tool to aid all of us in being more efficient and effective in what we do.

"I think it's generally agreed that about 5 percent of commercial farmers in this country have personal computers now," says Aims Coney, agricultural marketing manager of Digital Equipment Company. "I think that in the next five years, that number could go as high as 50 percent."

Some believe Coney's 50 percent is a

bit high, but not many are likely to say that the impact of the computer on agriculture will be "slight" by any stretch of the imagination.

"Farmers are right up there in terms of the adoption of new practices," says Coney, "and the business of farming is a perfect application for the computer."

What, then, can a computer do?

Basically, the computer can help you do operations in three areas: record keeping, calculations and communications.

First, record keeping: the computer can store huge amounts of information, either in its memory, or on a cassette or disk used with it.

Second, it can manipulate this information, or do calculations, to give answers to the many "what if...?" questions farmers have about their operations. The computer is able to do in a very short time what would take hours with a pencil and paper.

Third, communication is allowed when the computer is used in conjunction with a "modem"—which enables it to send and receive signals over the phone—so farmers can get information about markets, weather and farm news.

"In farming, where prices change daily and there's so much risk, the use of a microcomputer in 'what if' situations is particularly valuable," says Ron Stegall, senior vice president at Radio Shack.

"Think about that profit and loss statement at the end of the year," adds Stegall. "If the computer can help you make even one decision that results in smarter marketing, you may be able to cover the cost of the machine with that one decision. And many farmers make decisions like that every day."

Stegall makes no bones about the fact that he's in the business of selling computers. Yet he says, "If a microcomputer can't pay for itself within six to twelve months after you get it, then it may be somewhat of a luxury for the business at that time. I'm saying it can have that much impact."

But it's not always easy deciding whether or not you need a computer. Fortunately, most agricultural software companies provide help. For example, Valcom, the computer management arm of Valmont Industries, Inc., now offers a nationwide system of "Learning Centers." Here, farmers can get personalized advice on whether a computer is needed for their farm operation. Once a decision has been made, one can also get advice on software and hardware, and the necessary training to make the new management tool work properly.

With the variety of happenings in 1983 that had an effect on prices—the PIK Program, drought, the new dairy program—it's likely that those with computers were kept busy with 'what ifs.'

"The past year and the PIK Program provided a perfect situation for the benefits of computer use," says Mr. Coney. "It enabled people with computers to evaluate all the options they had and how they would affect the bottom line."

Mr. Coney feels that the computer can give medium-sized and smaller farmers improved ability to make a profit and compete with larger farmers.

"It vastly increases the farmer's capability as a manager," he says.

But before you run out and buy one, you might want to stop and think a minute. A computer can only juggle the numbers and use the information that you put into it. In other words, as one source put it: "The best computer in the world won't make a bad manager any better." It's still going to be your mind that is doing the management. The computer can only speed and simplify things.

David Roehm farms 1,000 acres in partnership with his father near Leesburg, Ohio. Several years ago he bought a computer for their operation, and now it's turned into another business—helping other farmers get started with computers.

Operating out of an office in Washington Court House, Ohio, Roehm counsels other farmers on what they need to get started in they way of software—the coded instructions that cause the computer to perform a task—and the hardware, the machinery itself.

Roehm says that many individuals getting "computerized" tend to start with the hardware first and then try to figure out how to apply it to the specifics of their operation. For many that path

(Continued on Page 38)

Telecomputing: Turning Farm Information Into Profits

It's really difficult to benefit from information you don't have. And in agriculture, specifically farming, those that are the most diligent about seeking information are the ones that are likely to turn a profit.

Radios, televisions and telephones have done their part in helping farmers obtain information. But often, it's been difficult for farmers to get in-depth and immediate information on the items that really affect them.

For many farmers, then, the computer holds the potential for filling a gap in agriculture that has been present for a long time.

"Telecomputing," which means the communications capacity of the computer when used with ordinary phone lines, may be one of the fastest growing areas of computer-use on the farm.

"It may well be that the *communication* capability is the benefit that will help pay for the computer's addition to the farm the quickest of any task that you use it for," says one midwest computer expert.

Some farm organizations and ag cooperatives have already made this service available to their members, and private companies are offering subscriptions. Farmers usually pay an initial fee, then are billed for the amount of time they actually "log" on the service.

The Alamosa, Colorado, vocational agriculture classroom is hooked up via computer to a service called The Agri-Data Network, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This service provides up-to-date weather, market and news reports to subscribers who call in on the telephone and connect to the main computer with a *modem*—a device permitting the two machines to "talk" to one another.

Alamosa vo-ag instructor Kirk Goble says that his classes use the system to stay current and put their new-found market-charting ability to good practice.

"The advanced ag class logs on the network every day," says Mr. Goble. "My students are now beyond the 'gee whiz' stage of telecomputing. They really are seeing how this modern technology could affect them in the world of work."

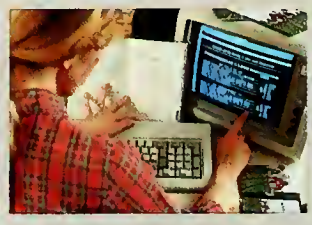
Tim Cody, president of the Alamosa FFA Chapter, says that it can give them a better chance to get a jump on the weather as well.

"In our area we have a short growing season and the possibility of severe weather during potato and grain harvest," he says. "Since weather can greatly affect the quality of the malting barley during harvest, it's nice to be able to get a specific weather forecast for our area at any time."

"The network's information banks are vast," says Richard Weening, president of AgriData Resources, Inc., the

(Continued on Page 38)

At last, a farm implemen



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Growing Up With the Computer

Like it or not, they're fast becoming a part of daily life — for parents, teachers *and* FFA members

EVERYWHERE you turn—computers. Ads for computers, computer games, computer graphics, stories (like this) about computers. Computers everything.

There's a good reason for it. Computers are, or could be shortly, very important to you, your parents, and their day-to-day efforts to make a living. Computer companies and others who stand to make money with the products they sell are very interested in small businesses like farming, or nursery and landscape, or machinery dealerships. Everyday needs make those operations prime targets for potential sales.

As young persons growing up in the eighties, FFA members will be even more affected by the "computer age," as some are calling it. Computers will be a part of your life, directly or indirectly. And if you prepare for their inclusion, you're likely to be ahead when you enter whatever sector of agriculture you choose.

"The young agricultural person's challenge is no different than any other young person's challenge," says Ron Stegall of Radio Shack.

"The computer is becoming cost-effective. It's going to be such a major force in the next ten years, you've got to be aware of it."

Stegall says that learning what a computer can do is no different than learning any other agricultural practice.

> What you really need to know is the importance of record keeping and management to farming operations *before* you learn computer skills.

"It's what schooling is for. Schooling is learning to deal with what you'll come up against in life. Learning about computers is just another aspect of helping young people get more proficient at what they choose to do," he says.

The way to learn, though, may not necessarily involve sitting down at the keyboard and immersing yourself in the machine. In fact, many think that for young people, that's not the way at all.

"What you really need to know is the importance of record keeping and management to farming operations before you learn the computer skills," says David Roehm, a farmer and computer consultant from Leesburg, Ohio.

"It's just like adding a little hand-held calculator to math class.

"You still have to know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide before you do that. You still have to know what is going on there," he says. "The same is true of farming, or any other business that can be helped with computer benefit. You still have to know what you are doing with operations and information that you have."

Aims Coney, of the Digital Equipment

Classroom Computers: A New Vo-Ag Tool

"The main objective of offering students some instruction on computers in the vo-ag classroom is to create an awareness of how they can be used in many different areas of agriculture."

That's what Lloyd McCabe, vo-ag instructor at Chowchilla High School, Chowchilla, California, says of the education available to his students, who regularly sit down and study computer screens and keyboards to calculate, construct and, well, compute.

At Chowchilla, the inventory, budget projections and entire ledger for the school's 50-acre farm is kept on the computer by students. In addition, after learning what the machines are and what they do, many vo-ag students are directed in creating their own programs for the family farm, obtaining information from their parents and developing the flowsheets specifically for whatever operations they have—whether dairy, cotton, almonds or grapes—the major crops of the area.

"I'm writing some original programs," says James Curutchet, Jr., FFA member from Chowchilla. "It's really a matter of taking it step by step and looking at other (software) manuals for directions on how to get it right. I'll go along pretty well for awhile, then I'll get stuck on something for a long time. Then I'll work that one out and get stuck on something else."

Some of James' friends have asked him how he can sit and stare at "that little green screen" for so long, but

(Continued on Page 34)

Above, computer skills are being taught in hundreds of vo-ag classrooms today. *Photo by Bill Stagg*

Co., has seen people applying the computer in many different businesses. He says the knowledge of the business is easily as important as the addition of computer skills.

Below, vo-ag students learn record keeping skills on the computer.

"The people who meet with a great deal of success in adding the computer are the ones who have already learned the different procedures involved in their businesses quite well," he says.

Before you Compute

Mr. Coney suggests that the mission for vo-ag students should be to learn as much about the technical aspects of farming or agribusiness as they can before getting involved with microcomputers.

"Learn what it takes to get a crop from planting to harvest; what it takes to get sows bred and hogs raised. Then, when you can get your hands on a computer, use it immediately to accomplish the work that you need done. Don't just play computer games or work on models that don't apply to your operation. Try to make it work for you."

All of this is not to say that it's not important to gain some experience on a computer terminal when and if you have the chance. It *is* important. But a computer is only as good as the person who is operating it, or in the words of a time-honored computer phrase: "Garbage in equals garbage out."

You may feel a bit unnerved or overwhelmed at the thought of trying to make heads or tails of that beeping, funny-looking television screen at first. But that apprehension should pass quickly. "Once they get over their fear of not knowing what they're doing, they love it," says one ag teacher of his students' new-found interest in computers.

A major advantage that you have when it comes to computers, according to Mr. Coney, is that young people don't have a heavy shroud of mystery between themselves and the machine. Some adults feel intimidated by computers.

"The attitude of younger people is different. They aren't as likely to feel threatened by the computer as their parents are," he says. "They've grown up with it." •••

Classroom

(Continued from Page 32)

James says that he enjoys it and feels he has a certain aptitude for it.

"I don't know, maybe it's the feeling that when you get it done, you have something that you've created. It's a real feeling of satisfaction," he says.

James, in addition to some work he's doing on the school farm inventory, is also writing a program for a friend whose family has a dairy and also sells huge storage bags for the purpose of storing silage and grain. He wants to turn this kind of experience into a career after he completes a college education.

"When I graduate from college in four years, computers are going to be used in so many areas of agriculture that there will be a need for people who can help others get started on them. I'd like to come back to Chowchilla and work here to do that," he says.

Chowchilla, part of a pilot program for integrating computers into the vo-ag classroom, has been able to do a little more than simply set up a computer for individual study. They actually have 21 terminals, six Apples and 15 Radio Shack TRS-80s. McCabe says the interest has been phenomenal.

MCCABE: "I've never seen aything that caused students to become so self-motivated. When they get into their own programs, it's hard to get them off the machines. They'd be in here all night if you'd let them."

"I've spent nine years in teaching, and I've never seen anything that caused students to become so self-motivated," he says. "When they get into their own programs, it's hard to get them off the machines. They'd be in here all night if you'd let them."

California is by no means the only state to be edging into computers in the vo-ag classroom. While the ability to offer this kind of instruction in every classroom may be rather limited now, it is growing, and in all parts of the country.

Dr. Blannie Bowen at Mississippi State University is involved in researching different manners of using the computer to assist in the classroom at the high school and college levels. Dr. Bowen can see benefits to both student and teacher.

"A big benefit, once we get going on it, will be with record keeping," he says. "We have to remember, though, whether record keeping is done with the computer or with a pencil and pad, it still takes the knowledge and discipline of the individual involved for it to work."

Dr. Bowen says it's still people—students and teachers—that make for a good learning experience in the classroom. The computer can only help as much as it is allowed to.

"Computers are going to make the good vo-ag classrooms better, but it remains to be seen how it's going to affect the ones that you might consider average," he says. •••

Some Terms You Should Know

Before you go "on-line," sharpen up your new vocabulary.

Access time - The length of time it takes to access a report and have it print out.

Acoustic coupler - A mechanical device which connects the telephone handset to a modem.

Application program - Software that performs a specific function (for example, word processing or accounts payable)

BASIC - A frequently used high level language for small computers, which stands for "Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code."

Bit - A binary digit (1 or 0) that is the smallest, most basic unit of computer information.

Buffer - Part of the computer's memory that is used to temporarily store information.

Byte - A memory cell that can store eight bits.

Character - A letter of the alphabet, a number, or any one of the symbols of a typewriter.

Chip - An integrated circuit, a single package containing hundreds or thousands of microscopic electronic components.

Command - A single or group of words or characters that instruct the computer to do something.

Connect Time - The length of time you spend "online," from sign-on to sign-off.

CRT - Stands for Cathode Ray Tube, and it provides a TV-like display (monitor or screen) to show the information in the computer.

Cursur - The flashing or nonflashing square or symbol that indicates your work position on the CRT.

Data Base - A discrete collection of computerized information.

Disk Drive - A machine that puts on and also retrieves information to and from a disk.

Electronic Mail - The use of computers and/or terminals to send, receive and store messages in a "mail" network.

FORTRAN - Short for FORmula TRANslation; a computer language used primarily for mathematical computations.

Hardware - The physical equipment of the computer, such as a terminal or printer.

Interface - The use of hardware or software to connect two devices that cannot be directly hooked together.

Line Printer - A high speed computer printer that prints an entire line at a time rather than a character at a time.

Menu - A list of choices displayed on a computer screen.

Microprocessor - The computer's central processing unit that contains all the elements for manipulating data.

Modem - An electronic mechanism that allows computer equipment to send and receive information through telephone lines.

Online - Sending, receiving and computing done by two units connected by phone lines.

Program - A sequence of instructions to a computer.

Software - A computer program with programmed instructions that tell the computer to perform in a specific manner.

Telecommunication - The transmission of data between computers and/or a terminal in different locations.

Terminal - Equipment that contains a keyboard for input and an output device such as a CRT or printer which may communicate with a computer. •••

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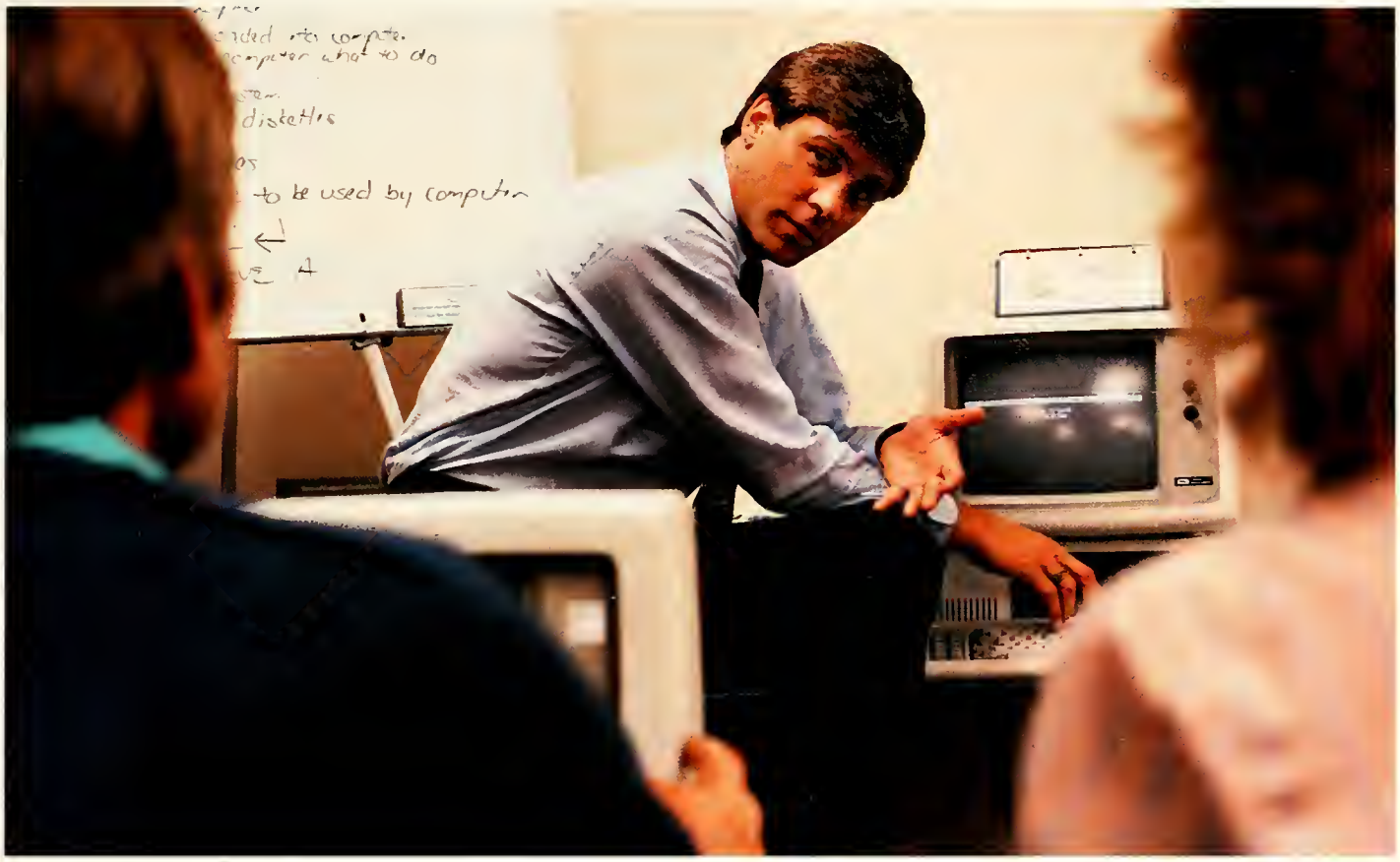

Learn how not to buy a computer.

The computer is here to stay. However, knowing which computer to buy can be a big problem — and buying the wrong one can be an expensive mistake.

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If you choose, you can also purchase your computer from ValCom, and get the same care and concern we offer in our Learning Center.

Before you make an expensive mistake, take the time to visit the ValCom Learning Center. Classes are filling rapidly, so call today What you don't know about buying computers *can* hurt you.

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Survey Profiles FFA Members' Computer Use

Research taken from a 1983 survey conducted by *The National FUTURE FARMER,* indicated the following information about FFA members and their use of computers:

Do you or any member of your family use a microcomputer?
Yes: 30.3 % No: 69.7 %

If yes, where?* home 20.4% school 73.6% other 18.9%

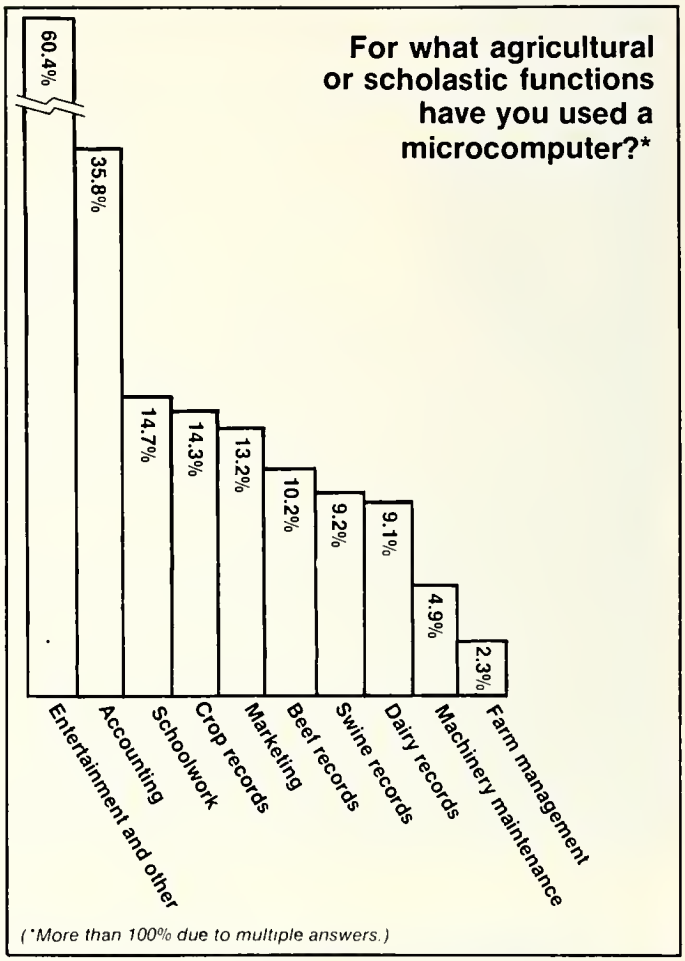
Do you have a microcomputer in your vocational agriculture classroom? Yes: 12.0% No: 88.0%

If yes, do you keep your Supervised Farming Program Records on the classroom computer?
Yes: 32.9% No: 63.1%

Does your school offer courses in computers?
Yes: 72.6% No: 27.4%

If yes, are you enrolled? Yes: 12.4% No: 87.6%

Do you plan to enroll in a computer course at your school?
Yes: 48.3% No: 51.9% Undecided: .8%



(*More than 100% due to multiple answers.)

New Award Program Tests FFA'ers Computer Skills

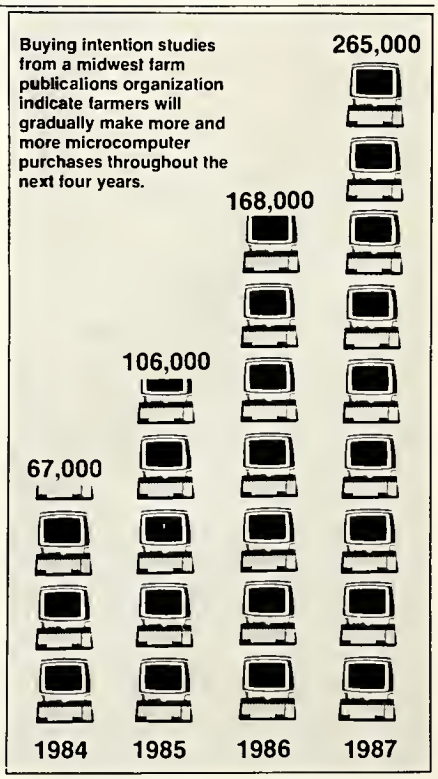
Sharpen up your bytes and buffers, boys and girls; the FFA has just come up with a way you can be recognized for skills at the computer terminal.

In an on-going effort to stay abreast of the computer age, the National FFA Organization announced last fall a new "Computers in Agriculture" Award program for Future Farmers of America. The award, sponsored by AgriData Resources, Inc. as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, will recognize FFA members on the chapter, state and national level for their skill and talent using computer technology to make better management decisions on farms and agribusinesses.

FFA members interested in the new award will be judged on their ability to adapt their SOE (Supervised Occupational Experience) program to computer technology, their performance and their results. Students will also be judged on ability to identify areas of agriculture and agribusiness which could benefit from computer technology, and how to apply computer knowledge to solve problems in agricultural management.

"One purpose of the FFA is to participate in worthy undertakings for the improvement of the industry of agriculture," says national FFA Executive Secretary Coleman Harris. "That purpose is well-illustrated in this award. This will encourage members to integrate computers with their programs and become proficient in their use."

One winner from each FFA chapter in the country will go on to state competition, where 50 winners will be selected. These winners will be sent to an all-expenses-paid national seminar on Computers in Agriculture, August 14-18, 1984, in Washington, D.C. For more details, see the award brochure which was sent to your chapter in November.



Predicted on-farm microcomputer purchases

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At the ValCom Learning Center, we have a short course called, "Do I Need A Computer?". It's a simple course designed to help you make the right decision about buying and using a computer.

If you decide a computer is right for you, the ValCom Learning Center can also provide complete training on using the computer.

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Farm Computers

(Continued from Page 29)

leads to problems.

"Some farmers decide that they want to have a computer do their books and they go out and get one of the inexpensive machines for $100 or $200 and they get soured on it when it turns out that it won't do what they want it to do," says Mr. Roehm.

"If they would have taken the time to get acquainted with what's available and how it applies to them, they'd probably have been more satisfied."

Mr. Roehm lists the following steps to go through in obtaining the right materials:

1. Define the problem—"There will be different hardware and software solutions to different problems... you've got to have an idea of how the computer can help you before you make any other decisions."

2. Find the software—"There are programs that do accounting and separate out all your operations; and there are programs tailor-made for livestock—think about the records you're keeping now and the records you would like to keep." A survey done in mid-1982 indicated that more than 200 different programs designed for agriculture were commercially available and the area is growing by leaps and bounds.

3. Determine the support you'll need—"Some software is easy-to-use, and some may take some dealer support or even enrollment in a night computer class."

4. Find the hardware—"By now, you will know what kind of machine it will take to make your program work."

5. Take it home and get started—"It has to be at a price you can afford, but it appears that the guy that's most satisfied is the guy who spent the money to really get it right. Saving a few bucks up front wears off pretty quickly when it won't do what you want it to."

"Computers in agriculture may be a kind of catch-22 situation right now," Mr. Roehm says. "You don't really know the power of one—all the things it can do for you—until you have had one and worked on it for a time."

To help farmers in the Ohio counties of Fayette and Clark deal with this situation, Roehm and his partner, Jim Dayton, have helped form cooperative-like "computer clubs." Several farmers go together and buy the equipment needed and share the use of it. The county extension offices serve as the location for the machinery and each farmer carries his information on a data disk. This way, they get to experience the feasibility of a computer before they dive into a heavier investment. ●●●

Telecomputing

(Continued from page 29)

company in charge of the computer system. "But for the individual farmer it's simply a personal information service that can give them any information they need instantly, 24 hours a day."

Other systems, providing both decision-aid programs as well as information programs exist also, operated by private companies, trade associations, cooperatives and government institutions.

AGNET, for example, is a computer network designed and operated by the cooperative extension service. AGNET was set up in Nebraska nine years ago, and originally, farmers in a five-state surrounding area could use the system. It has since expanded to include users in the continental United States, six provinces in Canada, and a few foreign countries.

AGNET offers many "decision-aid" programs to farmers through its telecomputer network, such as feed formulation and finance programs. Other institutions, on state, regional and national levels, offer telecomputing services. They include the Farm Bureau, the Professional Farmers of America, and the United States Department of Agriculture, for example. Many state cooperative extension services operate statewide systems.

AgriData recently announced a new network specifically for vocational agriculture students. Tentatively called the "ag-ed" network, the service offers "online" instruction, questions, activities and projects on business and marketing and management concepts to supplement a vo-ag students' learning experience. The final name for the new network will be selected via a name-selection contest.

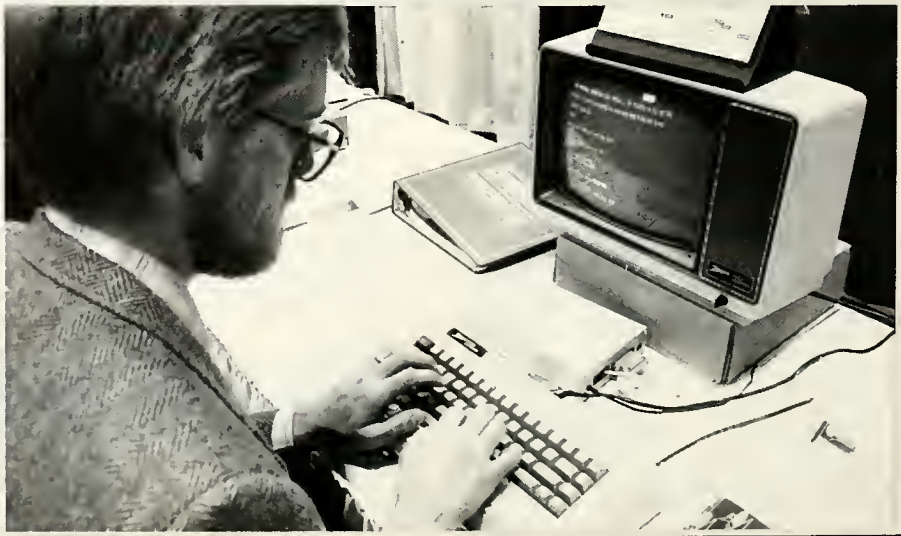
The "Ag-Ed" network offers instruction to supplement vo-ag students' learning experiences.

AgriData also offers what is known as a "two-way videotex" system, where users can forward information through the computer to other individuals who subscribe to it. This capability is called electronic mail, and universities and agribusinesses are looking at it as an opportunity to provide better information to farmers who are seeking it.

Kirk Goble found an additional use for it at last year's National FFA Convention.

"I stayed in direct contact with my vo-ag classes at home with the system called 'StarGram,'" says Mr. Goble. "Each day my students at home in Alamosa would log onto the network and give me messages and ask questions about assignments. Then, when I had a chance, I dropped in at the AgriData booth in the Career Show and responded, with the computer, to what they had sent." ●●●

Below, FFA Advisor Kirk Goble sends a message to FFA members at his chapter in Alamosa, Colorado, from the National FFA Convention in Kansas City, MO.



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Susan LaRochelle

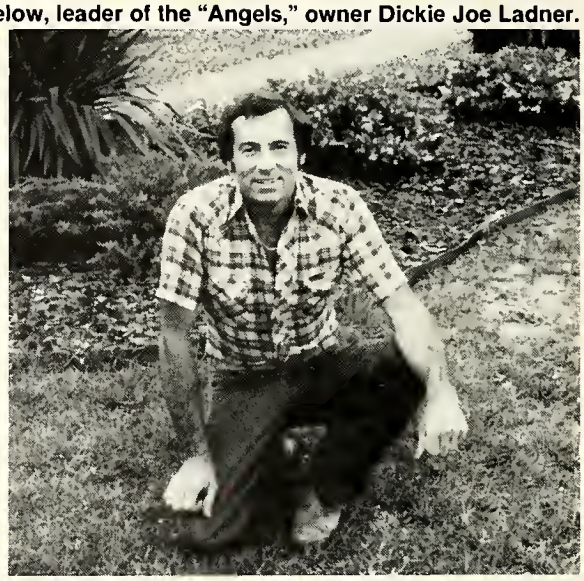
Kathleen Mills

Cathy Ellett

Mary Patton

Becky Jones

Below, leader of the "Angels," owner Dickie Joe Ladner.



Farming Thousands of Acres With "Dickie Joe's Angels"

This southern farmer hires farm tough women to help get the work done on this multi-thousand acre farm.

By Rich Thaemert

"DICKIE Joe's Angels." That may sound like a remake of a popular TV series, but it's not. These "angels" are today's women in agriculture, and they make up part of the labor force that keeps things running smoothly at Ladner Farms, a 20,000-acre soybean/cattle operation in South Mississippi.

Says owner Dickie Joe Ladner, "We compete with local industry for labor, and there always seems to be a shortage. We looked to women for help, and have been very pleased. These gals take a lot of pride in their work, and are probably more conscientious about their equipment than the men. What they lack in muscle, they make up for in brains."

Dickie Joe started by hiring "angels" to drive tractors, keep books and handle other odd jobs. Today, one-third of the 45-person staff at Ladner Farms is women. They range from 19 to 36 years in age, and hail from all across the southern states.

The angels are not to be taken lightly, either. While angel Becky Jones cleans the air filter on her tractor, angels Kathleen Mills, Susan LaRochelle and Cathy Ellett are driving four-wheel-drive tractors, discing under some the 13,000 acres of ryegrass pasture that will be doublecropped with soybeans.

Some miles away at the Ladner livestock office in Enshallah, angel (and cowgirl) Teresa Bryant is roping a calf, while angel Mary Patton checks figures on a shipment of cattle. Ladner Farms winter grazes 10,000 head of cattle, and buys and sells another 100,000 head. Many of those are bought as "mismanaged" cattle, fed out or treated, then sold for profit.

Whether it's in the field or in the office, angels Joan Cravens, top, or cowgirl Teresa Bryant, above, know how to get the job done.

Meanwhile, at the Ladner Farm headquarters in Poplarville, angel Joan Cravens codes some accounts payable and enters them into the company's microcomputer, while angel Carol Magers wraps up a business deal over the phone. Magers is manager and comptroller at Ladner Farms and runs the business when Dickie Joe is away. Two years ago, she flew to Texas to sign a $2 million deal for feed—an indication of her business savvy and Dickie Joe's trust.

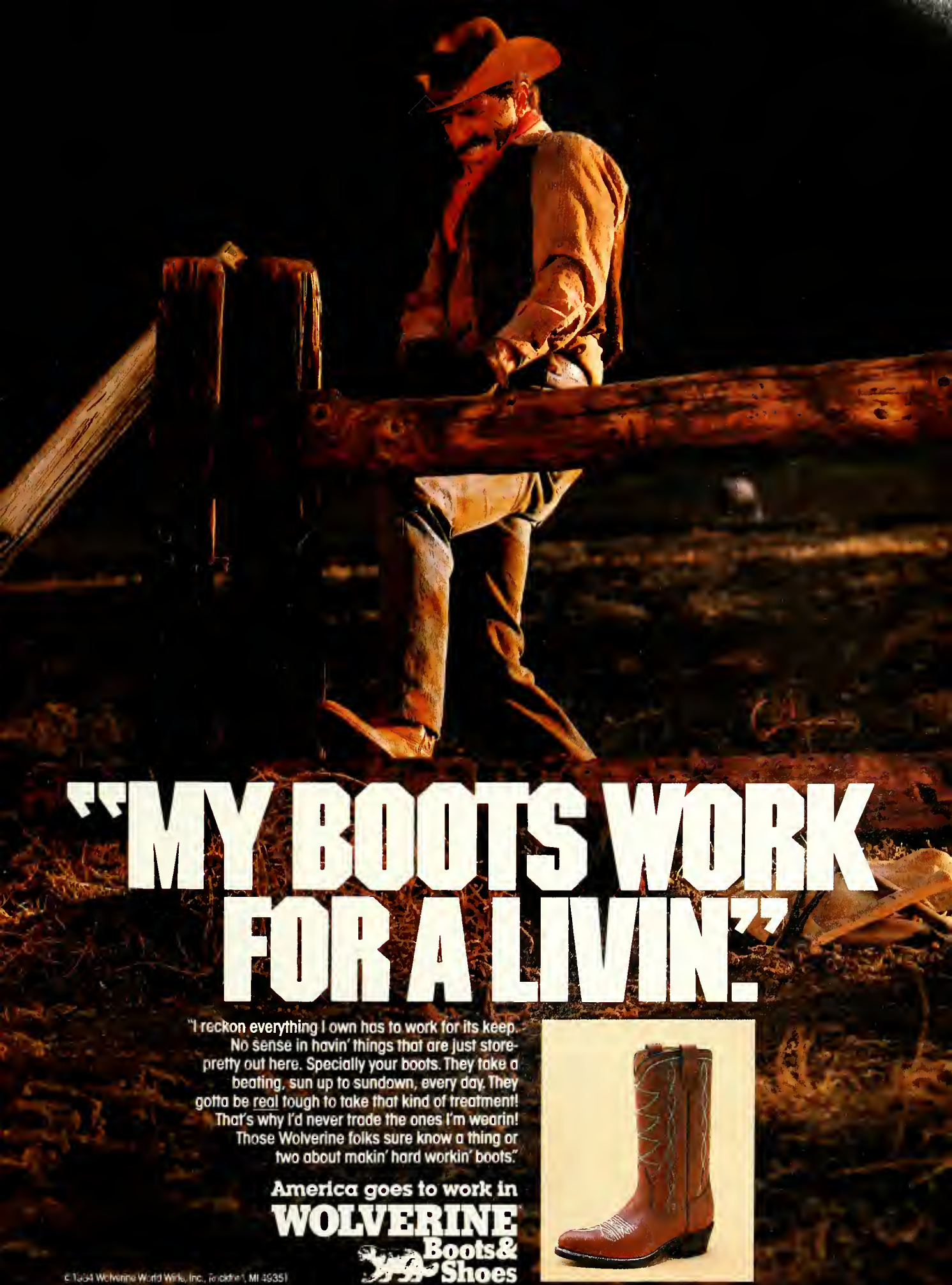
LADNER: "These gals take a lot of pride in their work. . . . What they lack in muscle, they make up for in brains."

The "angels" attract a lot of attention from visitors. But they're only part of the well-organized labor system at Ladner Farms. This system is put to the extreme test in the spring when cattle must be pulled off pasture, seedbeds prepared and soybeans planted.

The firm's 13,000 acres of soybeans encompass 25 farms. The company farms in six counties covering a 100-mile radius of home base.

To keep things coordinated and running smoothly, the force splits into

(Continued on Page 44)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Making Your Way Through College — With Computers

Farmers are turning in droves to computers for help in keeping records and making management decisions. Some enterprising ag students help finance their education by writing agricultural computer programs.

By Gordon Billingsley

REPORTS of get-rich-quick computer whizzes usually dazzle us with tales of global war games or intergalactic battles.

But there's a computer story set in a part of the real world where *tails* are more important than tales.

The heroes are some down-to-earth college students who are helping finance their educations by writing computer programs that help farmers and others in agriculture.

Students make as much as $500 to $1,000 each for programs that trace agricultural business sales, help farmers design farm buildings or even programs that teach farmers how to write their own programs. Experts say such enterprising students are filling a market that, until now, has lagged behind other computer applications, such as those for business and games.

Rose Roider, a graduate student in agricultural education at Southern Illinois University, wrote and copyrighted a computer program that teaches farmers how to program a computer. She recently sold it to a ten-state vocational agriculture education consortium for $500.

"After I took a class in farm computer programming, I helped teach the class and helped develop teaching materials for an advanced level class," says Ms. Roider. "I began writing this program for use in that class, and some education people at a national vocational education conference got interested in it. They suggested some changes and additions that I used, and they bought it."

Below, some vo-ag high school students are learning early how to write agricultural computer programs.

Carl Hortin, of Grayville, Illinois, is the manager of a farm supply company's seed division. He returned to school at a local junior college to learn computer programming.

One of his first projects was a program to help his company analyze sales by month, item and location of the branch office. He then developed a program that helps design farm buildings and estimate their costs.

"I used to have to wade through a manual about two inches thick looking for specifications and price quotes to fit together," Mr. Hortin says. "Now, any farmer can sit down with me and by making choices about windows, doors, floor types, building size and so on, have a complete list of materials and costs in just a few minutes. All the farmer has to do is make selections that appear on the screen."

His program recently sold to a three-state farm cooperative for $1,000.

Farmers are turning in droves to computers for help in keeping records and making management decisions. But the complex and varied business of farming has limited the number and availability of farm programs.

"Many non-farm enterprises have advantages over farm businesses in being adapted to computerization," says James Legacy, co-author of a textbook on agricultural computing.

"Fast food or hardware chain stores in California are very similar to such stores in Texas or Maine. One set of instructions could order goods, or keep inventory for any store at any location," he says. "Farms and ranches, on the other hand, typically have more business differences than similarities. Supplies needed by ranches on the eastern slope of the Rockies may never be needed by the citrus growers in Florida." •••

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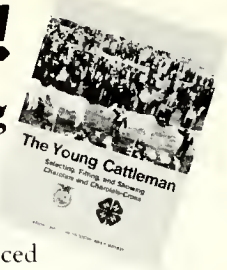

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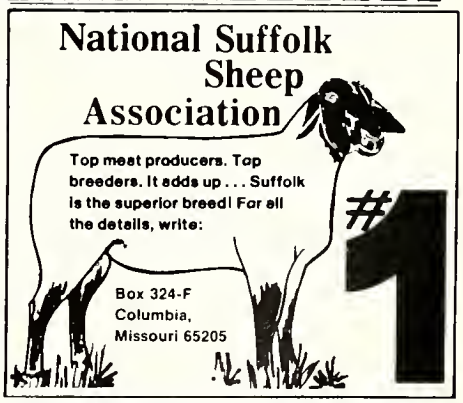

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Angels

(Continued from Page 40)

teams responsible for specific tasks such as application, equipment, winter pasture, summer crops and so on. Company vehicles—all 45 of them—are equipped with 100-watt radios that are linked to a central dispatch system at headquarters.

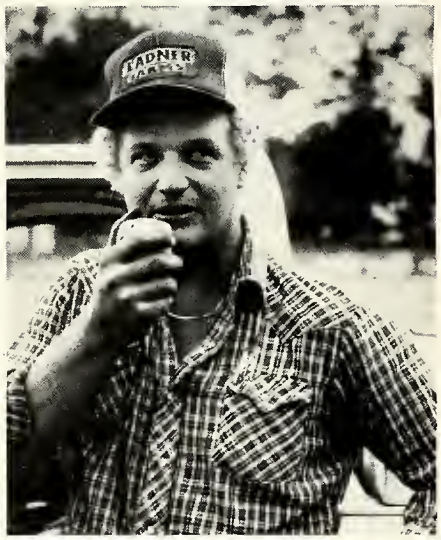
Heavy equipment is hauled from field to field on two flatbed trailers to save time and wear on machinery. "If it's raining at one end of the operation, we'll load up and move somewhere else," says Mr. Ladner.

Crews work around the clock during planting season, with two shifts generally working 12 to 16 hours each. Planting begins early May and is finished in six weeks.

All of Ladner Farms' soybeans are doublecropped behind pasture, and all are drilled. Drilled soybeans mean increased yield potential and less labor, since cultivations are eliminated.

A successful drilled soybean program depends on fertility and weed control, says farm manager Tommy Ellett, a former FFA member and Alabama state FFA president in 1973. He soil tests the doublecropped acres twice a year and applies prescription dry fertilizer blends that include micronutrients to ryegrass in the fall. Soybeans benefit from residual fertility and extra soil tilth when ryegrass is disced under in the spring.

For weed control, the firm applies a preemergence treatment of Sencor for broadleaves and Lasso for grasses. Says Mr. Ellett, "We believe a preemergence weed control program is extremely important in giving the soybeans a chance to get up and canopy quickly, so they can shade out other weeds.



Farm manager, Tom Ellett.

"We realize we may not get the rain needed for activations, but that's the risk we take. We just don't have time to preplant incorporate. We've got too many acres to cover," he says.

Later, Ladner Farms will apply postemergence herbicides to clean up "escape" weeds. Ryegrass is flown on two weeks before harvest on bean ground. Mr. Ladner says as soybean leaves fall off they form a good mulch on the soil surface, which helps the ryegrass germinate. "By the time the soybeans are off, we already have a good stand of ryegrass," he says.

Mr. Ladner says doublecropping is part of the philosophy at Ladner Farms. "We try to do everything we can to make this business work, especially when the economy is so bad. That means utilizing your land year round if you can." •••

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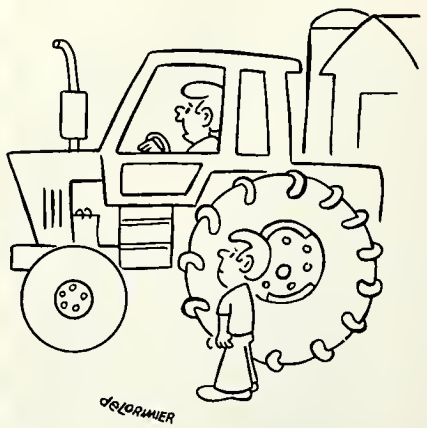

"It can't be out of gas. Just this morning dad said the carburetor was flooded."

HORSE SENSE GOT HER THE CENTS

Annique Cohen
Madison, Wisconsin

Not only did Annique win $250, but, more important, she earned the honor of being the 1983 National FFA Horse Proficiency Award Winner.

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From Start to Finish

Kelly Horton wanted to raise hogs for an SOE program, but living in town made it nearly impossible. Here's how one FFA member created her own farm project — without benefit of a farm.

By Michael Wilson

SOMEDAY, Kelly Horton will attend a job interview and be asked the question, "Do you have a farm background?" Although she lives inside the city limits of Elko, Nevada, Kelly's honest answer will be a confident "yes."

FFA'er Kelly currently serves as Nevada state president. By most standards her FFA background is common for young FFA achievers: strong leadership skills, a talented public speaker. Where she differs from most is her unique "start to finish" SOE program. With help from her father Louie Horton and Elko ag instructor Jim Cooney, Kelly began a hog operation as a freshman where she not only *produces* hogs; she markets them, has them processed, and delivers the meat products to her customers.

And she does it all without benefit of a home farm.

"I'd always grown up working with animals," says Kelly, a confident, bubbly 18-year-old. "I also saw there was a service I could provide to the community and hopefully make some money for school. I realized that through my project I could raise the funds to head for college.

"Hog prices weren't exactly what they were supposed to be during my four years of high school," she laughs. "But I survived."

Kelly makes it sound easy. But there were several challenges she faced when she first sought to start a hog operation. Finding a place to raise the animals was her first consideration.

"When I first started off I talked with some local people in hopes that I could rent from them," says Kelly. She first found a friend who let her keep swine at a ramshackle old place that didn't have water—so Kelly carried water in five-gallon buckets for two years. "There was no electricity either, so we experimented with propane heaters for heat lamps," she remembers.

Deciding how to market the hogs was another challenge. In sparsely-populated Nevada, few hog market outlets exist; none in Elko. She decided to sell her products door-to-door by taking orders among neighbors for particular cuts of meat. Kelly's public speaking experience—she won the state prepared speaking contest as a sophomore, the extemporaneous contest as a junior—helped immensely. Getting along with people has never been a problem for Kelly.

Above, Kelly Horton started a hog production program from scratch, renting buildings and carrying water when water wasn't always available.

"One thing I learned was that because I had a better quality product, people were loyal," she recalls. "But when economic times got rougher, and unemployment was up, I learned I had to keep my price comparable to grocery store prices in order to keep my customers."

Kelly also did some "on-the-job" research to help her marketing plan. "When I first started out I tried selling whole hogs, but people don't like to have all that pork on their hands at once. An average family usually eats about a half-hog in six months."

Kelly started developing new ways to market her hogs. She sent letters describing her service. "I gave bonus discounts for each new customer a regular customer would bring in. I tried selling certain products to certain segments of the community.

"Basically it was a challenge to find out different ways to market my product. It was a big eye-opener."

Kelly faced two more challenges: getting supplies and having the hogs processed. The nearest feed store and hog processing business was over 150 miles north in Twin Falls, Idaho. "This was the closest feed distributor for a reasonable cost," says Kelly. "But I couldn't afford to just go up there for one job. I'd pick up a load of feed and a load of processed meat at the same time. Gas prices really contributed to my costs." Kelly keeps two large freezers in the family garage for storage.

Kelly first became interested in raising hogs as an eighth-grader in California. "When I first started I wanted to go into purebred Durocs, but in Nevada there's really not a market for purebred or registered animals," she says. She then turned to cross-breeding.

"What I try to accomplish in my breeding, because I'm commercial, is a three-way cross," she says. "What I'd like to do is have a third of the mothering breed Yorkshire or Landrace, and two thirds be a meat breed—Duroc, Hampshire or Spot. That's what I've accomplished in my latest pigs."

Clearly Kelly's knowledge of the hog business is impressive. But it's a case of "hands-on" experience at its most basic level. "Being so far away from other breeders, you learn by experience," she says. "And when I say experience, that includes my ag teachers and vo-ag class. If I have a problem, I call them." Mr. Horton, a former ag teacher, was also a big asset.

Kelly is now a freshman at the University of Nevada, with plans to study agricultural communications and pre-law after transferring to Oklahoma State next year. Although her long-range goal called for a project which would earn her money for college, poor hog prices and an effort to repay a $5,000 loan left her little savings for college. "But quite a few scholarships I received were because of activities in FFA," she adds.

"And besides, the experience has been great." ●●●

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◄ Left, Suzuki introduces the "Quadrunner LT185," which features nearly 200cc of four-stroke power from a twin dome combustion chamber powerplant. Right, Dairy Equipment Company introduces the "Bou-Matic," a new computerized feed managment system which enables a dairyman to program the desired ration of feed concentrates for each cow in a herd of up to 450 cows. ►

Below left, "AG-BAG" now offers what they call a "balage" bag in four-foot, five-foot and six-foot sizes. The bale bag enables farmers to provide oxygen-free "forage storage." Right, Digital Equipment Corporation's new Rainbow 100 computer, combined with third-party software, can assist farmers in managing businesses more efficiently. ▼ ►

Below right, the "Shoof" system is a new, inexpensive and highly reliable method for treating hoof problems of horses and cattle. For more information, write Vet Brand Inc., P.O. Box 409, Harbor City, CA 90710-0409. ▼

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Above, Jim Mackereth, vice president of the Penn State chapter of Collegiate Future Farmers of America, and a junior in Agricultural Education, talks with Professor Richard Stinson, author of the new book, "Greenhouse Crop Production." The book promotes new technology and efficient greenhouse management.

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News, Notes, and Nonsense from Everywhere

Chapter Scoop

by Jack Pitzer

Rosemary Castro reported the Greenhands of Kofa, AZ, had to perform skits during their inititation.

N-N-N

Coleen Lancaster of *Dorman,* SC, FFA won the great Greenhand race which was a series of 20 steps toward earning the degree which all new members had to complete. It consisted of various little steps and a major quiz.

N-N-N

FFA participated in the Honor Society carnival at the *Moriarty,* NM, school and operated a sponge throw booth which attracted lots of customers since faculty members and school administrators were on hand to put their faces up as targets.

N-N-N

They made 35 gallons of apple butter to finance next year's chapter banquet at *Charles Town Junior High* in WV.

N-N-N

Four *Hickory Flat,* MS, members participated in the county fair and came home with the champion and reserve champions in Yorkshire gilts, market hogs and commercial heifers.

N-N-N

The *Daviess County,* KY, FFA entry in the Owensboro Christmas parade took honorable mention.

N-N-N

White House, TN, Chapter represented their state in the national invitational parliamentary procedure contest in Carthage, MO, just prior to the National FFA Convention.

N-N-N

Greenhands in *Wallowa,* OR, conducted a turkey raffle in November to raise extra money to help pay for their new FFA jackets. Turkeys were gifts from local merchants.

N-N-N

Evidently it's getting to be a habit for Advisor **Steve Barnett** to have a flat tire on the way to national convention from *Broken Arrow,* OK.

N-N-N

The *Mountain Home,* AR, Chapter members along with Advisor King and School Superintendent Hunter spent the day before Thanksgiving doing yardwork at the home of local veterinarian Dr. Riley in appreciation for his support of the new FFA livestock show barn.

Wapella, IL, FFA and FHA organized a fun activity for their community on Halloween night and sponsored a party for children in their community.

N-N-N

Members of the month for *Zillah,* WA, Chapter are **Cheryl Lantis** and **Rena Nash,** chairman and vice chairman of the earnings and savings committee. It was their hard work that made the fall concession stand sales and Fright Night film festival a success.

N-N-N

The *Cumberland Valley,* PA, FFA Olympics were held in October at the ag shop where about 30 members participated in various contests and some even won a pie-in-the-face award!

N-N-N

Moriarty, NM, horticulture FFA members made pompoms for cheerleaders at their school this fall.

N-N-N

"Death In The Fast Lane" was a film shown by the Baytown, TX, police officer who spoke to the *Robert E. Lee* FFA for the program on teenage drinking and driving. Mothers Against Drunk Drivers also were part of the program for 80 members in attendance.

N-N-N

Holton, KS, FFA sponsored a booth at the county fair and surveyed the fairgoers about any interest in forming a local alumni affiliate.

N-N-N

Anamosa, IA, members were taught how to lay sod by a member's father who is also a nurseryman. Then they put their new skills to work and layed 20,000 square feet as part of their work on their school landscaping project.

N-N-N

Gilroy, CA, will use the $1,200 they made selling cheese and sausage for their trip to the Cow Palace.

N-N-N

Members of the *North Mahaska* FFA in New Sharon, IA, make high tensile wire gates to sell.

N-N-N

Corduroy Connection is the name of a work opportunity session for Indiana FFA Chapters at the state leadership camp. Members are encouraged to contribute time during the year doing chores like raking leaves, cleaning gutters, shoveling snow or hauling hay.

The basketball team of the *Lebanon Regional* FFA Alumni Affiliate in CT, has a new coach ready to take on other teams in their area including nearby alumni teams. They call themselves Alumni Astros.

N-N-N

In *Woodstock,* IL, when the community has its Christmas clearing house and collects clothes, food and toys for the others, it is the FFA who represents the high school of the community in the project by contributions and work.

N-N-N

Chapter officers in the *Northwest District* of KS, have an annual new and old officers picnic.

N-N-N

FFA made and ignited the "flaming M" for the homecoming game at *McKay* High School in Salem, OR.

N-N-N

Triplets joined the FFA at *Tecumseh,* OK, **Sheila, Kristen** and **Clay Harwell.**

N-N-N

Wapella, IL, Alumni sponsored a hamburger fry for the FFA chapter they support. And beat them in a softball game 20 to 7.

N-N-N

An alligator chewed the bobber off of the *Avon Park,* FL, Chapter reporter's fishing line at an officer's retreat.

N-N-N

Fremont, MI, paid for their trip to national convention by cutting firewood.

N-N-N

Ruby Mountain, NV, FFA butchered a lamb as part of their classroom work and then barbequed it for the faculty.

N-N-N

National Farm Safety Week was observed in *Scottsburg,* IN, by the FFA officers showing safety films to the local elementary schools.

N-N-N

This year 160 members and parents attended the *Mt. Pleasant,* TX, FFA hamburger fry which included the advancement of 45 members to Greenhand and 28 members to Chapter Farmer.

N-N-N

Let's hear about what your chapter is planning for the spring. And share stories about the chapter's FFA Week activities. Be specific and tell how the members got involved, what they had to do to make it a success and if it was fun.

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An Interview With Actor

Eddie Albert

Star of stage and screen, Eddie Albert is also a vocal supporter of vocational agriculture and the Future Farmers of America.

Editor's note: it's not often that the Future Farmers of America is linked with major television or film personalities. But when actor Eddie Albert made a surprise guest appearance before 22,000 appreciative FFA members during the 1981 National FFA Convention two years ago, he sparked a mutual love affair.

Although acting made him famous, Mr. Albert has other interests when he is off stage. He has never been personally involved in FFA. But he is a long-time suppporter of vocational agriculture, recently volunteering his services to a new national FFA Public Service Campaign , which will be aired across the nation on television, radio and print media during national FFA WEEK, February 18-25, 1984. He is also an environmentalist and strong supporter of soil conservation and agriculture in general.

He is probably best known for his role as the city-slicker-turned-farmer in the hit television comedy series, "Green Acres," which ran on CBS from 1965 to 1971. From 1975 to 1977, he starred in the highly-rated CBS series, "Switch."

Today, between roles on Broadway and in films, Mr. Albert devotes much of his time to learning about the world-wide problems of hunger, poverty, pollution and soil erosion, and finding solutions to those problems.

Here are exerpts from our exclusive interview:

FUTURE FARMER: Have you always been such an avid supporter of vocational agriculture?

ALBERT: For the last 20 years, I'd say. When I became an actor 40 years ago, I went off in a different direction and lived in New York, for the Broadway stage, and then to Hollywood. About 20 years ago I started growing my own food. We grew practically all our own vegetables right in the middle of town. And yes, I did plow up the front lawn of my house in Hollywood, and planted it in corn. I've got fresh corn coming all summer long and well into the early fall.

FUTURE FARMER: Did you have any comments from your actor friends about plowing up the front lawn?

ALBERT: Yes, Karl Malden said to me, 'Hey, I'm going to do that too!' I dug up the front yard partly because I hated to see that space unused, but also because I was aware of the fact that the front yard is news; I was trying to get people to grow their own food. I said to myself, my greenhouse in back is not news; it's just somebody growing some food. But if I plant the front yard, everybody will say 'What is he doing?' And the newspapers will come out and cover it, which they still do today. It's funny, because people will come up to me and say, 'Hey, how's your garden?' They don't ask me about a picture or TV.

FUTURE FARMER: Do people connect that with your popular TV series, "Green Acres?"

ALBERT: They ask me, but there was no connection. I was doing that long before Green Acres.

FUTURE FARMER: While we're on the subject: what about "Green Acres?" Do you think that helped or hurt the farmer's image?

ALBERT: I think it was a marvelous TV show. Actually it's shown all over the world now. Everywhere I go, Malaysia, Africa, South America, people come up and say 'Hello, we see you on "Green Acres;"' or in Spanish, it's called "The Happy Farmer." It made me kind of a world citizen.

But I wonder if it helped the farmer.

Below, Eddie Albert donned an FFA windbreaker for the PSA announcements.

One of the big problems I'm trying to work on is that the general public considers the farmer as kind of "lower" than the city fellows, which is really not true. Vaudeville and other comedians helped that image, and I'm not sure whether "Green Acres" added to that or detracted, because in the show, while all the farmers were outwitting me, the city man, nonetheless it made some of the farmers look foolish. I suppose it was some good and some bad.

I know all the rural people I see loved the show. They always ask about it. I was in the Macy parade recently and as I rode down the various avenues on the float, people started singing the Green Acres theme song all along the line of the parade. I was very impressed. In the main, I think it's done a lot of good. I hope so.

"We've got to inform city people... that milk doesn't come from bottles, it comes from cows, and so on. I said years ago that the farmer is the number one citizen. People looked at me like I was nuts."

FUTURE FARMER: What about your decision to become a spokesperson for FFA—how did that come about?

ALBERT: I think it was an outgrowth of my lifetime interest in conservation that led me into problems facing the farmer. What was he going to do? As I was going around the country, I began to see about ten years ago that the soil was eroding very rapidly. The Soil Conservation Society told me that topsoil has disappeared from 18 inches down to 6 inches. When that goes, it dawned on me *then we go.* The problem right now is that the loss of our topsoil is really frightening. The frightening part of it is they blame the farmer.

The solution is to educate the public. To say 'look, you're a city man, but your food comes from that farmer and you can't expect him to pay $500 an acre for terracing and put that money up himself.' We've got to do it and help the farmer out. He'll take his share of the cost of course, but soil conservation is a *national* problem, not a farmer's problem. It's an economic problem for the whole nation for centuries to come. I've been writing and talking about it, and it's really become part of my life.

The problem is getting so terrifying. America doesn't realize it, but what we're doing to the farmer, we're doing to ourselves. We're going to pay the big bill as well as the farmer, in production and costs.

FUTURE FARMER: What kind of effect do you hope the new Public Service Announcements will have when people all over the country see you on TV supporting FFA and vo-ag?

ALBERT: For one thing, it will give me a lot of prestige to be associated with FFA (laughs).

I hope it will help strengthen FFA and inform city people of what's going on out in the country; that milk doesn't come from bottles, it comes from cows, and so on. We've got to educate the nation of the importance of the farmer. I said years ago, the farmer is the number one citizen and people looked at me like I was nuts. They think that industry is very important, and the big cities. I pointed out that New York wouldn't even be here if it weren't for agriculture. Chicago wouldn't be there if it weren't for agriculture. Our big universities, our art museums wouldn't exist without agriculture. Agriculture is the start of America, the start of America's income. The income from the agricultural area makes the other corporate industries look like tiny Mom and Pop candy stores.

When you put the farmer in a position not to buy a new tractor, you're putting people out of a job in Detroit, in industry. A wheel in a factory doesn't turn until somebody in a truck comes up and unloads a raw material—grain, coal, anything. Those dollars go right up the processing ladder to packaging, heating, melting, separating, transportation, freezing, etc.

We have got to educate industry and people in government, that the whole nation of America thrives on the farmer.

FUTURE FARMER: What can FFA members do to support your message?

ALBERT: The big problem is that the farmer doesn't have the opportunity to join hands with the next door farmer. Like a lot of people, he just hates the idea of politics. I don't blame him. That's where it starts. We can move ahead only so fast. These are the realities of existence, and I know that. But we must keep trying, not in an antagonistic or adversary way, but as part of things we have to solve, part of the problems to solve.

Long before I was an actor, I was a citizen and a son and a brother and a father and a friend. Those things take priority—long before you make a living as an actor. I'm very much concerned with the health of America, both political health, economic health and nutritional health of our people. I travel a great deal and as I travel I realize more and more how rich and how lucky I am to have been born here. When I look at some of the places I could have been born, I can't wait to get back here. I really appreciate and fairly understand what a great piece of luck we have had, those of us here. I would like to pay it back. I was born with a debt. I hope I can pay back that debt before I check out. •••

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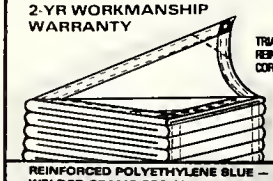

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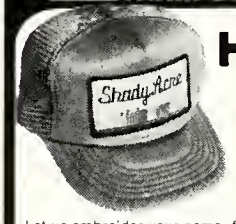

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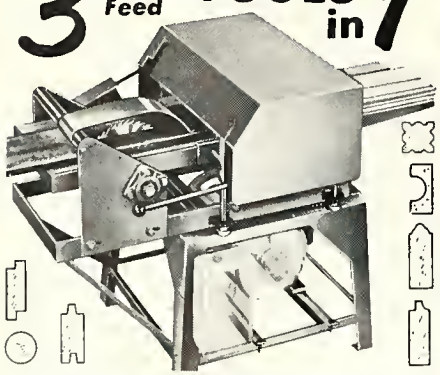

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FFA in Action

1983 champs in the national invitational parliamentary procedure contest held just prior to the National FFA Convention in Missouri were from Crescent City, Florida, shown with their advisor. They were one of twelve state entries to compete for the championship.

A Totally Lawful Contest

The sixth annual national invitational parliamentary procedure contest was held at Carthage, Missouri, on November 8 and 9, 1983. During the past six years 60 teams, 51 chapters and 458 members have participated in this event. The previous winners were: 1978-Carthage, Missouri; 1979-Colton, Washington; 1980-Ozark, Missouri; 1981-Mariner—Everett, Washington; 1982-Bradley—Cleveland, Tennessee; and 1983-Crescent City, Florida.

Tuesday was reserved for acquainting participants with rules, judges, host families and a qualifying round of the contest was held. A banquet sponsored by area businesses was held Tuesday evening for sponsors, judges, advisors and participants.

Participants stay in the homes of Carthage FFA members in order to exchange FFA awareness among states and chapters.

The final contest demonstrations began at 8 a.m. on Wednesday. The demonstrations last up to ten minutes and teams were judged on their ability to use parliamentary procedure. Contestants were also given written examinations.

The teams involved this year were: Dawson, Minnesota; Gainesville, Missouri; Ainsworth, Nebraska; Carencro High—Lafayette, Louisiana; Elkton, South Dakota; Michigantown, Indiana; Hill City, Kansas; Palouse, Washington; Osage, Iowa; White House, Tennessee; Crescent City, Florida and Katy, Texas. *(Jim Honey, Advisor)*

Comparison Bean Shopping

The Findley, Illinois, FFA rented 70 acres from the railroad in which we planted 27 different varieties of soybeans provided by 11 different companies. During the summer all the members of the chapter had to put at least five hours in on the farm in order to go to the national tractor pulls.

In September we held a field day at which representatives from the 11 different companies had a chance to talk to area farmers who came about their varieties of beans.

The top five highest yielding varieties were Landers-3710 which made 53.91 bu.; Agro-Soy-64 " which made 39.71 bu.; Agro-Soy-31 which made 38.97 bu.; Agro-Soy-46 which made 37.14 bu.; and Tabor-3230 which made 37.96 bu. *(David Keown, Reporter)*

Convention Travelers

The trip to the National FFA Convention on Tuesday, November 8, for six FFA members and two sponsors representing the Melrose, New Mexico, Chapter was an interesting one.

The first stop on our trip was at Iowa Beef Processing Plant near Amarillo, Texas. We were taken on a tour through the plant to learn how beef was processed.

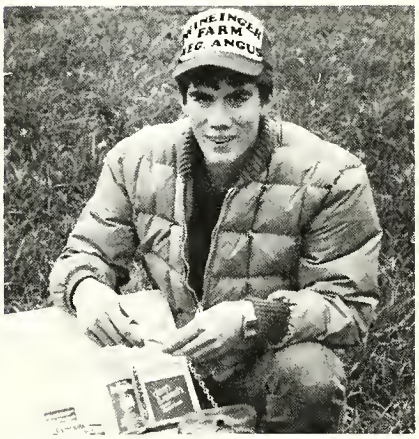
(Continued on Page 56)

Eagerness to Move Forward

Above: Matt helps his father, Earl, the Marion FFA Chapter Advisor, mix chemicals in the classroom for a soil test.

Left: Matt and his brother, Ron, who was recently elected National FFA President, tighten a strand of wire near the corral built by Matt (left).

Below: Matt checks the contents of a farm first aid kit he constructed and stocked.



Matt Wineinger, Marion, Kansas 1983 National Home and Farmstead Improvement Winner

Matt Wineinger is eager to develop his future as a cattle rancher. His activities in the FFA Home and Farmstead Improvement Program have been vital to his plan.

As part of that program, Matt maintained fences and constructed a corral on a 160-acre pasture he owns with his brother. He also built calving and show stalls in the barn, repainted it and other outbuildings.

His future plans include converting the homestead area of his land into a ranch headquarters with office, exhibition and sale buildings. Matt and his brother intend to expand their present herd of 50 registered Angus cattle to 500 head.

In addition, Matt constructed a porch, patio and sidewalk at his family's home, planted shrubs, reseeded the yard and constructed a decorative split-rail fence. He also installed all the wiring and plumbing in the house.

FFA provided a firm foundation for Matt's goals, plus support and guidance to develop his interests.

The Upjohn Company is proud to be the sponsor of the FFA Home and Farmstead Improvement Program. The people at Upjohn think it's important to work together with young people like Matt and his fellow FFAers to make the American farm a better place on which to work and live.

Helping young people to develop their ambitions and move forward to success is important for all of us.

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FFA in Action

(Pick up ACTION from Page 54)

Then we stopped at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where we visited the famous National Cowboy Hall of Fame. Everyone enjoyed it. We ate a good meal and returned to our motel for the night. The next morning we were on our way to Kansas City and stopped at Claremar, Oklahoma, to visit the Will Rogers Memorial.

We finally arrived at Kansas City at 5 p.m. on Wednesday and began our participation in the National FFA Convention.

Police Duty and FFA

Becoming a police cadet is an unique activity for an FFA member in Indiana. Terrie Fields, a senior in the Delta, Indiana, vo-ag department is determined to make it as a police officer someday.

Terrie has had the pleasure of working with several civic organizations, the Indiana State Police, the Jerry Lewis Telethon and several divisions of the Muncie Police Department.

She has had professional training in the areas of first aid, accident investigation, firearms training, directing traffic, communications, building search and fingerprinting.

Her present duties in the crime prevention division are working with the Neighborhood Crime Watch program.

FFA member Terrie Fields is a police cadet and is supervised by patrolman Larry Brown and Sergeant Don Riddle.

Cows for Cash

A check for $1,100 was the result from a recent dairy cattle consignment auction sponsored by the Hayfield, Minnesota, FFA Chapter.

Gary Heydt, a licensed auctioneer, was president of the Hayfield FFA in 1979-80, and continues to maintain his membership in the chapter. He was the spearhead for the auction from its inception, lining up cattle to be consigned and the facilities for the sale.

The local FFA members provided much of the promotion plus the labor to wash and clip the cattle prior to the sale. According to Camp Courage authorities, the dairy cattle consignment auction is a first in innovative fund-raising activities for the camp.

Camp Courage, located in Golden Valley, is open to individuals of all ages who are handicapped by blindness, hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and other causes. The $1,100 donation will provide four one-week camperships for individuals at the Courage Center. *(Frank K. Moon, Advisor)*

Hayfield, Minnesota, FFA President Phil Burns, left, and former member Gary Heydt, present a check for $1,100 from the FFA to John Dumont, the community relations director for Camp Courage.

Spanish to English

For the first time in FFA history a native-born Puerto Rican FFA member

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was a national officer candidate.

Juan Perez, 1983 American Farmer degree recipient from San Sebastian, Puerto Rico, was nominated by his association. He owns ten acres and raised bananas, coffee and oranges to earn his degree.

Juan had been state president in Puerto Rico and had been to the State Presidents' Conference and to the national convention. However, he lacked proficiency in using English as his major language. And so the prospects of the national officer interviews seemed bleak.

That was until state Executive Secretary David Vazques contacted Rob Hovis, former national FFA officer, now a vo-ag instructor in Ohio. Mr. Hovis had traveled to the Puerto Rico FFA and knew the program and the language.

So in August, Juan flew to the mainland on a self-designed get-experience-within-our-own-nation exchange. He arrived just in time for the county fair and even got roped into working in the food stand with all the teachers.

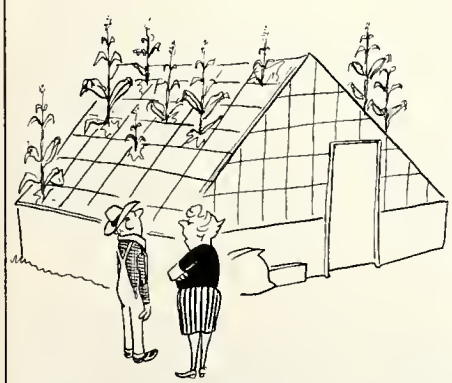
Soon his presence in Convoy, Ohio, was a popular topic—even at the local coffee shop. One morning Juan provided a sample of his island's coffee and the owner brewed a pot of Puerto Rican coffee for all to taste.

Juan Perez

Between August and the November convention, Juan visited members, audited classes, stayed with former state officers Tim and Kelly Wood and Rick Metzger. All the while Juan was forced to speak English and study about FFA. He operated a combine and was totally involved in the FFA in his home-away-from-home.

At the convention in November, Juan was not elected to office, but his experience will certainly set an example for members back in his state association and in the collegiate FFA at the university.

(Continued on Page 58)



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FFA in Action

(Pick up ACTION from Page 57)

Moms To The Rescue

Each year, the California, Missouri, Chapter has its annual barbeque which is the main money-making project of the whole year.

When the day of the barbeque arrives, the mothers and officers start early since it takes all day to prepare the meal. Tickets go on sale at least two to three weeks before the barbeque. This year 1,005 advanced tickets were sold. *(Christy Hagemeyer, Reporter)*

This Project Is For The Birds

Lincoln-Way, Illinois, Chapter is sponsoring a backyard wildlife program for those persons interested in improving and certifying their backyard for wildlife. With the help of the FFA, citizens are able to determine the needs of their backyard, the improvements they wish to add, develop a program to meet their plans, and ultimately make their backyard official through the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife program.

The three requirements of wildlife are food, water and cover. The FFA will show interested persons how to incorporate these needs as easily as possible into their backyard. Another service being offered by the chapter is a bulk seed service for birdfeeders.

Third In The World

Merced, California, FFA dairy judging team ranked highest of all USA teams competing at the International FFA Judging Days in Edinburgh, Scotland. This team placed third in the world in June, 1983, after winning the national FFA title in November, 1982.

The team's coach and instructor Steve Gomes says that although the bulk of the squads competing were from Scotland, competitors were from Belgium, France, Switzerland and West Germany.

Unlike FFA dairy judging contests in the U.S. where three-person teams compete, Scotland competition requires two-person squads. The Merced team, which placed third, was composed of Matt Nunes and Dante Migliazzo. Bobby Silviera, the third person of the national winning team, teamed up with 4-H champion team member from Ohio.

The contest consisted of two classes of Ayrshire, a Scottish breed, and two classes of British Friesen. Students were given eight minutes to judge each class instead of 12 minutes as in the United States.

"I was really satisfied with the trip," said Advisor Gomes, "from the standpoint that the students were able to see another country's system and develop a greater appreciation for what we are doing here. Sometimes you don't know how good you are until you have something to compare with."

Other highlights of the trip came after the competition when the team toured London and other spots of interest and lived for several days with English host families. *(Mike MacKenzie, Advisor)*

People Movers

This year the Macon, Missouri, members built a tram for the Missouri Farm Bureau Federation. The tram was a chapter service project and was used at the Missouri State Fair in August to transport people. Due to the extreme heat during the fair, a large number of people used the tram. The project was financed by the Farm Bureau and cost approximately $1,500 to build. The FFA received a monetary donation for their efforts.

On Top Of The Hill

Freddie Ferrell, right, served as a page for Congressman James Jones, left, from April to June. Freddie is a member of the Owasso, Oklahoma, FFA and came to Washington, D.C. after completing his sheep showing in the spring. He was nominated after being interviewed by a member of the congressman's staff in Oklahoma. Freddie has been very involved in FFA public speaking events and discovered the political scene an interesting one.

Dancing In The Hay

The Meridian, Idaho, Chapter sponsors an annual Harvest Hoedown in the agriculture shop. The dance is to raise money for FFA activities held throughout the year.

There are four committees needed to organize the dance. A decorations committee is in charge of gathering straw bales to put around the shop as scenery. The earnings and savings committee is in charge of ticket sales. A concessions committee is in charge of providing refreshments. The recreations committee sets up the music.

A major part of the dance is the harvest queen contest. *(Renee Dennis)*

Troubleshooters

The small gas engines troubleshooting team from the Mars Hill, Maine, Chapter took the gold award and first place honors at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts. Members on the team were Wayne Oneal and Vinal Fletcher.

The Eastern States competition consisted of state winners from the 15 states in the eastern FFA region. The Mars Hill team had previsouly won the right to represent the state of Maine by advancing through competition on the local and state levels. The small gas engines troubleshooting contest tests students on their ability to diagnose problems that prevent engine starting and smooth operation, to start an engine and adjust it for maximum performance, to follow safety practices, to identify engine parts and to demonstrate small engine knowledge through a written exam.

Fruitful Co-Op

The Talawanda, Ohio, Chapter organized its citrus fruit sale into a cooperative. There are many agricultural cooperative businesses in the Butler County area and the FFA members will

(Continued on Page 60)

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FFA in Action

(Pick up ACTION from Page 58)

apply many of these co-op principles to their own business. A constitution and bylaws were written and a board of directors elected.

Two members from each class were elected to the board of directors with Chris Dunkelberger as chairman and Bev Niehaus as secretary. The board was responsible for establishing prices, patronage refunds rates and sales and distribution policy.

Tracy Beckett was appointed manager of the co-op and is responsible for the day-to-day business of the co-op. Assistant managers Julie Lindsey and Lisa Sheard will be in charge of distribution of the citrus fruit to the members. *(Ron Tilford, Reporter)*

Campus Conflab

What type of leadership conference would offer classes with such titles as Six-Pack and On The Road Again? These catchy titles were used at the third annual leadership conference held at Virginia Tech on September 30, 1983.

The conference was sponsored by the Virginia Tech Agricultural Education Society and was open to all Virginia FFA chapters. The main goal of the conference was to motivate young members of the FFA to become more actively involved.

Following the opening session, FFA members attended leadership classes taught by future agricultural educators. These college students helped plan and teach the leadership conference. The Virginia Association officers also assisted as teachers.

The teachers and state officers wanted to offer interesting classes which would attract young FFA members' attention. For example, "Six-Pack" was a class that taught the duties of the six chapter officers and "On The Road Again" emphasized traveling in the FFA. Having the conference in Virginia led to "Virginia: Mother of Something Besides Presidents." This was a class on the history of FFA and Virginia's role in the FFA's founding.

A second day was spent by the students with a career program and tours of the campus sponsored by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Alumni. That afternoon, many attended the Virginia Tech-University of Louisville football game. *(John Hillison, Associate Professor, Agricultural Education)*

Squeezing Money Out Of Apples

The third annual Eastmont, Washington, Chapter apple cider squeeze allowed all vocational agriculture classes to chop, grind, squeeze, get sticky and taste the products of a good old fashioned cider squeezing.

Approximately 2,000 pounds of Winesap variety apples were used to produce 120 gallons of fresh cider.

The cider was then sold at the homecoming football game that evening. *(Robert Brown, Advisor)*

Top Level Support

New Mexico Governor Toney Anaya, who was an active member of the Moriarty FFA Chapter during his years in vocational agriculture, purchased the grand champion lamb at the New Mexico State Fair from Cody Burson, Roswell-Goddard FFA member for $33.50 a pound. State Fair Queen Kevin Saunders from Santa Fe is also shown. *(Dan Ware, Executive Secretary)*

Tree Tests

Judging tree types, diameters and existing timber volume are important skills that foresters use daily. But, students competing in the FFA woodland judging contest in October near Ava, Missouri, discovered these same skills can be an essential part of land treatment decisions and of farming in general.

About 70 students from 13 schools in southwestern Missouri made up 23 teams in the second forestry and woodland field day. The woodland judging contest in Missouri was created by the Soil Conservation Service forestry committee in 1982 to develop the interest of forest management in students. Committee members wanted a way to reach future landowners, and they knew the FFA members planned to develop a forestry event for its 1985 national contest.

During the morning, contest participants identified trees and shrubs and completed a zig-zag timber cruise. In the afternoon the events turned to physical competition in double and single bucking logs, a post throw for distance, dot splitting with axes and a tug-of-war.

The year's contest was held on the Dale Cartwright/Bill Honeycutt farm of 3,000 acres. They also provided some 300 pounds of hamburger for the noon meal. *(Julie Tockman, Editorial Assistant, Soil Conservation Service)*

After the judging competition, contestants enjoyed tug-of-war and sawing contests.

From Downtown To Down On The Farm

The Greenwich, New York, FFA recently helped to sponsor a day on a farm program for "Fresh Air Children" from New York City. Every year "Fresh Air Children" from ages 9 to 14 visit rural Washington County in upstate New York for two weeks. This year the Washington County dairy club, the county extension service, agribusinesses and the Greenwich FFA invited 150 children to spend a day on a local farm.

FFA also sponsored pony rides and showed a Food For America movie. *(Jim McClay, Advisor)*

Watermelon Kickoff

The Melrose, New Mexico, FFA helped kick off Old Timers Days celebration with a watermelon feed. The chapter officers were introduced after they performed the opening ceremonies. President David Frazier gave the welcome, then 20 members and 60 guests devoured approximately 400 pounds of watermelon.

Afterwards, the members and parents met at the ag shop to begin work on the FFA float for the upcoming parade. There were 15 bales of hay on the float and several FFA members rode and threw candy to spectators. The float took third place. *(Ryan Elliot, Reporter)*

A Tall Texas Tale

Way back in 1947 the dairy judging team from Weatherford, Texas, won the national dairy cattle judging contest held in those days at Waterloo, Iowa.

Chapter advisor to that team was a new teacher on the job, Sam Skiles. Today, Sam Skiles is still advisor for Weatherford FFA and was at this year's national convention to receive chapter recognition with chapter members.

Milford Meadows was a member of that first team and in 1982, his son Keith earned the American Farmer degree. At the 1983 convention, son Tracy received his degree. Brad is currently a member of the chapter.

Long term support and involvement of families are just an early clue to why Weatherford FFA is often a superior ranked chapter. Although no official alumni affiliate is organized, former members and parents are a backbone to this chapter of 150.

That's why the chapter can manage to continue to host an invitational high school rodeo for students in north Texas. They claim it's the oldest operated rodeo in Texas still run by one group. The rodeo draws 2,000-5,000 people a night and about 40 contestants. Obviously a rodeo takes lots of help from members and former members and parents. The chapter makes some money on the project but the main motivation is fun.

Like most chapters this one is involved in a variety of judging events and has an on-going BOAC project. Other advisors are Luther Fergason, Gary Ashlock and HaroldSkiles, Sam's son.

In 1972, the school purchased 24 acres for a farm just on the edge of town not far from the school. The FFA has 12 acres in hay, has developed 3 acres as a peach orchard and has built facilities for members to house livestock.

A school greenhouse, 100-feet by 40-feet, is located on the farm as well as two classrooms to use for instruction on site. One of the vo-ag instructors lives on the farm in a home constructed by other vocational students in building trades.

Brad Meadows and Advisor Skiles checked the plantings in the town square done by FFA when the community re-landscaped the downtown.

Another BOAC project was conversion of the old train station into a museum for the community. It is across the street from year-round farmers' market.

Feeds And Feeding

The Parkway, Ohio, freshman and sophomore vo-ag students ran a feed nutrition experiment in relation with their animal science studies under the direction of Dr. John Wills, feed consultant, and Bill Clouse, their advisor.

Feed ingredients were discussed along with their relation to feed nutrients, net energy maintenance, net energy gain and digestible energy. The importance of protein supplied by ten essential amino acids was stressed.

The class was divided into five teams with ten Hubbard broiler chicks each. Each team then mixed their own feed ration, kept a record of feed consumption, weekly weight gain in grams and feed conversion. *(Bryan Heindel, Reporter)*

ACTION LINES ➤ ➤ ➤

- Use official FFA stationery for chapter officers.
- Order FFA wallet calendars for the advisor.
- Build a picnic table for the schoolgrounds.
- Add green plants to the ag classroom.
- Give FFA litterbags to your non-FFA pals to use in their cars.
- Organize an area in the vo-ag department for members to work on special notebooks.
- Have the advisor's pickup painted.
- Take your folks with you to the contest.
- Give blood.
- Put a renewed push on safety in the shop.
- Send the superintendent to the national convention with the advisor and member delegates.
- Make a sign to identify the vo-ag department inside the school. Shop too.
- Challenge the alumni in a citrus sales competition.
- Be sure your chapter says thank you to the cooks for the banquet.

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The Joke Page

Did you hear about the kidnapping?

Well, a low-down, nasty thief stole a "Cabbage Patch" doll out of the back of a lady's car. Then he left a note that said: *"Listen lady, if you tell anybody about this, I'll turn this cabbage patch dollie of yours into 'Cole Slaw.'"*

Mary Waldhauser
Loyal, Wisconsin

"How are you at doing homework?"

Mother mouse was watching her three little mice play. Then out of nowhere a cat jumped out at her.

The little mice said, *"Help us, Mom."* So she thought for a moment, then she started barking at the cat. And he ran.

Then the three mice asked, *"Where did you learn that?"* And she said *"It always pays to know a second language."*

Keyla Martin
Owensboro, Kentucky

Sign in a school zone: SLOW DOWN. DON'T KILL A KID.

Underneath, in a childish scroll: WAIT FOR A TEACHER.

Scott Hillen
Leigh, Nebraska

The children were at camp and their parents were having breakfast. *"Gosh, I miss them already,"* the mother said.

"Me, too," the father replied. *"Why don't you knock my coffee over and rub jam in my hair?"*

Debbie Werner
Greensburg, Indiana

"If you like to travel," the manager of the employment agency told the job applicant, *"I have a job open in California. Can you pick lemons?"*

"I sure can," was the grim reply. *"I've had five used cars in two months!"*

Don Welsh
York, Pennsylvania

There once was a small Indian chief named Shortcake and his wife named Straw. One day Shortcake died and another Indian chief asked Straw what she was going to do with Shortcake. Straw said sadly, *"Straw bury Shortcake."*

Mike Wilson
Brownstown, Indiana

The minister of a local church was walking down the street one day when he recognized the town drunk unsteadily ambling along.

"Drunk again!" remarked the minister as they met.

"Me, too!" said the drunk, tipping his hat.

Twila Ewing
Spencerville, Ohio

Woman driver to policeman: *"Why don't you people get organized? One day you take away my license and now, the very next day, you ask to see it."*

Jackie Rohr
Mountain Home, Arkansas

Wife: *"This reminds me of the days when we were dating."*

Husband: *"We never played chess in those days, Gladys."*

Wife: *"No, but even then it took you two hours to make a move."*

Nancy Navalta
Laupahoehoe, Hawaii

A farmer and his wife, having spent the morning loading their pumpkin crop into a truck, sat in the shade of an oak tree to rest. The farmer fell to musing upon the nature of things and said to his wife, *"You know, God made a mistake. He put those big pumpkins on small vines and tiny acorns on this big oak tree. If I were God, I'd have put the small fruit on small plants and big fruit on big plants."* Just then a squirrel scampered through the oak tree overhead, sending down a shower of acorns on their heads. Whereupon, the farmer's wife turned to him and said, *"Lucky for us you're not God!"*

Lynette Howard
Snowflake, Arizona

Jethro was the most bashful boy in the county, so his mother was astonished when he told her he was going a-courting.

He spent an hour getting ready and left with a strange look in his eye, but he was back in half-an-hour.

His mother asked, *"How'd it go?"*

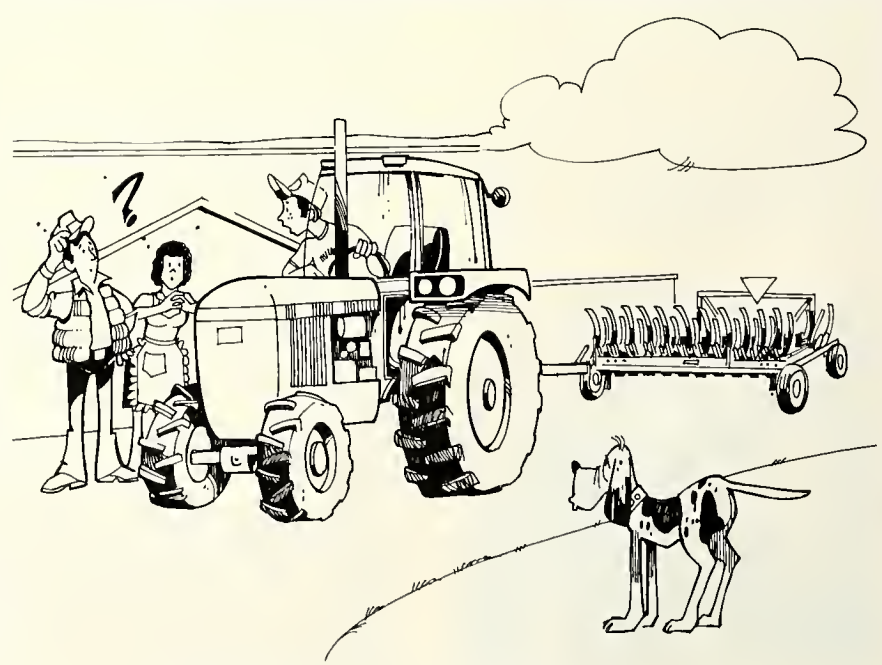
"Fine," said Jethro.

"Did you see her?"

"Sure did," he chuckled. *"And if I hadn't ducked down behind the hedge, she's have seen me, too."*

Diane Ivey
St. Pauls, North Carolina

Charlie, the Greenhand



"Had to buy the tractor, too. The dealer wouldn't break the set!"

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